

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 458 818

FL 026 974

AUTHOR Ostler, Nicholas, Ed.; Rudes, Blair, Ed.
 TITLE Endangered Languages and Literacy. Proceedings of the Fourth FEL Conference (Charlotte, North Carolina, September 21-24, 2000).
 INSTITUTION Foundation for Endangered Languages, Bath (England).
 ISBN ISBN-0-9538248-2-9
 PUB DATE 2000-09-21
 NOTE 145p.; For the proceedings of the third conference, see ED 438 714.
 AVAILABLE FROM Foundation for Endangered Languages, 172 Bailbrook Lane, Bath, BA1 7AA, England (\$30). Web site: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Philodophy/CTLL/FEL>.
 PUB TYPE Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
 EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
 DESCRIPTORS American Indians; Applied Linguistics; Dialects; Foreign Countries; Indigenous Populations; Language Attitudes; Language Maintenance; Lexicography; *Literacy; Native Speakers; Oral Language; Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Learning; *Uncommonly Taught Languages
 IDENTIFIERS Catawba (Tribe); *Endangered Languages; *Gascon; Guatemala; Mexico; Nicaragua; *Orthography; Peru; Taiwan; Tarahumara (Tribe); Vietnam

ABSTRACT

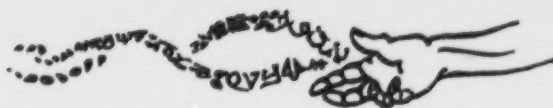
Papers for the fourth Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) Conference include the following: "Endangered languages and Literacy" (Nicholas Ostler, Blair Rudes); "Keynote Address: On Native Language Literacy: a Personal Perspective" (Ofelia Zepeda); "A Community's Solution to Some Literacy Problems: The Mayangna of Nicaragua" (Elena Benedicto); "Pathway to an Acceptable Orthography" (Francene Patterson); "Technology, Literacy, and Orality: The Case of Coeur d'Alene Language" (Gary Sobbing, Audra Vincent); "Building a Frame for Our Past: Contemporary Guatemalan Mayan Literature" (R. McKenna Brown); "The Future of Koho: Mon-Khmer Language of Vietnam" (Neil H. Olsen); "The Applied Linguist in Indian Country: Preservation and Revival of the Catawba Language" (Claudia Y. Heinemann-Priest); "How Do You Write Lisu?" (David L. Morse, Thomas M. Tehan); "Orthography as Literacy: How Manx Was Reduced to Writing" (Mark Sebba); "Four Orthographies for Forest Nenets?" (Tapani Salminen); "When You Choose, Must You Lose? Standard Orthography versus Dialect Diversity" (Blair A. Rudes); "Developing a Standard Orthography for an Oral Language: The Innu Experiment" (Anne-Marie Baraby); "Literacy Ideologies and the Future of Gascon" (Thomas Field); "Perspectives on Literacy in Endangered Language Revitalization" (Patricia Shaw); "Incorporating Literacy Style Prior to Literacy in the Elementary Tribal School" (Kristin Denham, Kevin George, Erek Rensink, Jonathan Sarr); "Literacy Ability and Practice in Peru: An Indigenous Account" (Kathleen Tacelosky); "The Bilingual-Bicultural Literacy Program for the Tarahumara of Chihuahua" (Carla Paciottto); "The Prospect of Taiwanese Indigenous Language Instruction in Taiwan: Looking at a Successful American Indian Community School" (Jiwas Bawan); "All Literate and Nothing to Read: The Problem of the Lack of Written Literature in Rotuman" (Marit Vamarsai); "Gaulish Literacy: A Dying Glimmer" (Nicholas Ostler); "Orthography, Lexicography, and Language Change" (Ivy Doak, Timothy Montler);

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"Limitations of Literacy in Bagri" (Lakhan Gusain); and "Semantic Barriers to Literacy in the Sierra Tarahumara" (Julia E. Lonergan). References are included at the end of each paper. (KFT)

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Endangered Languages and Literacy

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Proceedings of the Fourth FEL Conference

*University of North Carolina,
Charlotte*

21-24 September 2000



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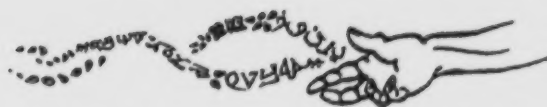
Nicholas Ostler

and

Blair Rudes

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FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

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*Endangered Languages
and
Literacy*

Proceedings of the Fourth FEL Conference

*University of North Carolina,
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21—24 September 2000

Editors:

Nicholas Ostler and Blair Rudes

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*First edition 21 September 2000
1000 copies*

ISBN 0-9538248-2-9

Published by

The Foundation for Endangered Languages
UK Registered Charity 1070616

based at

Batheaston Villa
172 Bailbrook Lane
Bath BA1 7AA
England

tel +44-1225-852865
fax +44-1225-859258

e-mail nostier@chibcha.demon.co.uk

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Philosophy/CTLL/FEL/>

Endangered Languages and Literacy

Foundation for Endangered Languages
Charlotte, North Carolina - 21-24 September 2000

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Note on Sources for the Cover

Information on Sequoyah, his script for Cherokee, and surrounding circumstances have been drawn from:

Encyclopaedia Britannica. 15th edition. (1974-1991) s.v. *Sequoyah*.

Holmes, Ruth Bradley, and Betty Sharp Smith. (1976, 1977) *Beginning Cherokee*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Waldman, Carl. (1985) *Atlas of the North American Indian*. New York and Oxford: Facts on File Press.

There are also informative web-sites, including downloadable fonts for the script, at:

<http://ngeorgia.com/people/sequoyah.html>

<http://www.powersource.com/cherokee>

<http://intertribal.net/NAT/Cherokee/WebPgCC1/syllabary.JPG>

<http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/guides/Cherokee.html>

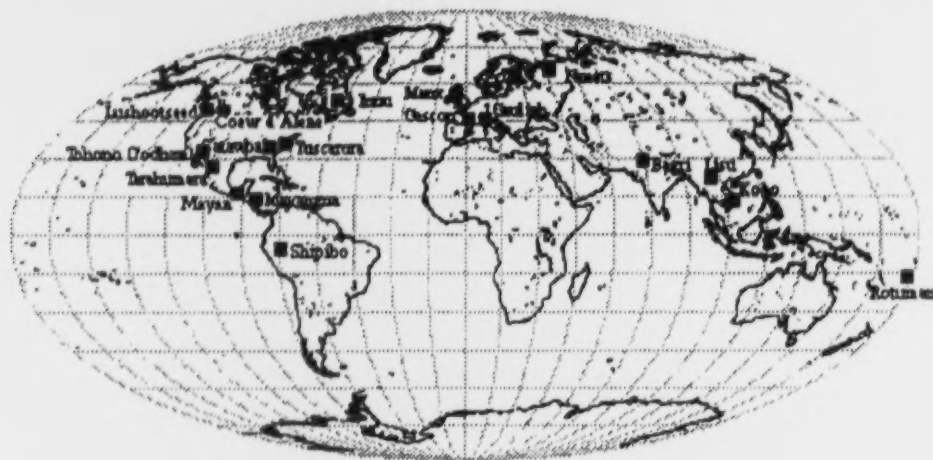
Versions of the 1828 portrait, originated by Charles Bird King, are reproduced in colour at the first of these sites, and in black and white in Waldman 1985 (p. 66), where it is credited to New York State Library, Albany.

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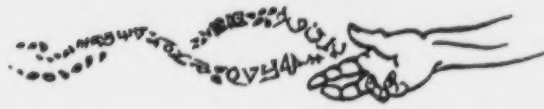
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Endangered Languages and Literacy



1

Opening the Book

Endangered Languages and Literacy

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Introducing literacy is widely seen as a necessary first step in maintaining and promoting use of the language.

But efforts to develop a written language and instill literacy may encounter cultural obstacles. It may also have unforeseen consequences. Might the development of literacy, over time, alter or interrupt the oral transmission of a community's knowledge and beliefs? At a more conscious level, may the members of the community resist literacy? Their culture may enjoin beliefs about the spiritual or mystical nature of oral communication. And inevitably, functional literacy will work big changes in the power-balance of a community: will its introduction create divisions within the community between the literate and the illiterate that ultimately may have social or economic implications?

Moreover, before these potential dangers that beset literacy can be faced, a prior problem is the development of an acceptable written form for a language.

This development work may serve a useful purpose even before literacy becomes widespread. It is often considered an essential preliminary for the creation of grammars, dictionaries, and teaching materials. It also serves the preservation of traditional oral literature in communities where the younger generations lack the patience to learn the texts orally.

But even within communities that are receptive to the introduction of literacy, the development of an acceptable written language may pose challenges. These include difficulties in **selecting or editing dialects** on which to base the written language; problems in **adapting orthographies** to the sound system of the language; and pressure from **font availability** on typewriter or computer, forcing unacceptable compromises in the orthography for the language.

More radically, the language may just not be readily transcribed without ambiguity: it may lack acceptable vocabulary or syntactic structures which can substitute (in the written language) for suprasegmental, kinetic,

and paralinguistic components of oral, face-to-face communication.

Modern technologies have brought additional choices to endangered language communities. For example, with tape recorders, compact disk recorders, video recorders, television, radio, and computers, it possible to create "talking" dictionaries, grammars and books, thereby eliminating the need for a written language and literacy.

Here we need to ask whether the costs of acquiring and maintaining desired technologies may be prohibitive; and whether the community needs members with special expertise to employ the desired technologies, or the resources to train members in the technologies or hire outsiders. In any case, the community may not be willing to accept or use the chosen technologies.

These, then, the problems of introducing literacy at all levels, are the focus of our Conference.

The conference begins with a keynote address from Professor Ofelia Zepeda of the University of Arizona. Ofelia has experienced in her own life, (quite consciously since the process started in her twenties) the transition from reading her first words in Tohono O'odham to becoming a linguist, lexicographer and poet.

In *Literacy from Within*, others take up this theme, and consider what members of a language community need to do in order to build a literate community. Elena Benedicto, of the Mayangna people in Nicaragua, reports on communal discussions still unresolved to settle technical orthography and also find a working relation with outsiders who might help. Francene Patterson, of the Tuscarora Nation in NY, reviews struggles of the Language Committee to agree a spelling system. Gary Sobbing and his student Audra Vincent write about realistic considerations in developing teaching software for Coeur d'Alene. And McKenna Brown gives a fascinating account of what can be done when the literacy is in place: how does a multi-language

community like the Maya build a literature that addresses their own concerns; but also makes a resonant statement to outsiders?

In **Choosing an Orthography**, speakers describe how the varied situations of languages have a bearing on choosing an orthography. Neil Olsen tells of Koho, a Mon-Khmer language from Vietnam, which is also being developed in émigré communities in France and North Carolina: these communities seem set on a path of separate development from Vietnam. Claudia Heinemann-Priest describes the technical and social steps taken, in South Carolina, to give the indigenous Catawba language a written form. Back in South-East Asia, David Morse and Thomas Tehan, working with Lisu, show graphically how a transition has been managed, without loss of readers, from an old and established orthography to one that is in many ways more practical. Finally, showing something of the long-standing nature of these questions, Mark Sebba discerns the political agenda behind the orthography for Manx developed in the 18th century.

Literacy and Dialect Diversity examines the costs in community divisiveness often imposed by establishing an orthographic standard. The choices involved are dissected by Blair Rudes. Examples are taken from far-flung sites: North Asia with the Forest Nenets by Tapani Salminen, North America with the Innu-Montagnais by Anne-Marie Barab. In Western Europe, Thomas Field shows how political boundaries, often gratuitous, dramatize the variant approaches that may be taken to closely related dialects.

Promoting Literacy turns to the issues that arise when an orthography is established, but its use is not yet widespread. Patricia Shaw reviews some general reasons why teaching a language in a literate form may benefit revitalization. Kristin Dinham, Kevin George, Erek Rensink and Jonathan Sarr emphasize the need, in introducing Lushootseed tales to small children, to keep an authentic linguistic style, rather than acculturating translations to English. Kathleen Tcelosky looks at the demographics, very different from that in a large community, of literacy among speakers of Shipibo in Peru. Carla Paciotti discusses the relevance of the Mexican government's literacy materials to the actual situation of the Tarahumara. Jiwas Bawan compares the task facing Taiwan, in promoting literacy among its small-language communities with the challenge to the Navajo Community School in Arizona. And Marit Vamarasi discusses a case where the problem is not the absence of readers but of writers: could vernacular literature provide a beginning in the island of Rotuma?

Finally, **Cautionary Notes** alludes to a variety of cases where, for one reason or another, literacy has not proved an unalloyed blessing. Nicholas Ostler shows that, although ancient Gaulish was literate, in different

alphabets, for some 350 years, it never formed an autonomous tradition or a written literature: literacy remained a contact phenomenon, and died out long before the language itself. Ivy Doak and Timothy Montler, speaking of Coeur d'Alene, ponder the dangers of an inexact orthography when speakers have ceased to know the language well. Lakhon Gusain takes Bagri in western India as an example of problems facing literacy programmes in that country. And Julia Lonergan points to the ominous motives of some protestant missions who would bring literacy to the Tarahumara.

Some final words. It is worth remembering that to use a writing system at all is still a minority option among the languages of the world. (Trond Trosterud¹ estimates that only 33% of the world's languages are functionally literate at all.)

Any writing system makes an implicit statement about the cultural loyalty of the writer. When this loyalty is contested, the choice of writing system itself becomes contentious.

Furthermore, writing is by its nature permanent, contrasting with the transience of speech: as such, it can easily create an uncompromising "bone of contention". The need to find the right political balance for the loyalties expressed in writing systems is at the root of standardization problems.

Literacy provides a variety of stories of how divisive features have been made manifest. It is even claimed (in a recent book by Leonard Shlain²) that literacy itself is divisive, giving a culture-wide emphasis to analytic thinking, and so giving a firm basis for doctrinal disputes, and ultimately religious wars.

Whatever the truth of that, it is clear that choices about literacy are likely to be at the centre of many small languages' struggle for survival. It is in this spirit that this collection of papers is presented to the world.

Acknowledgements

Besides ourselves, the Programme Committee consisted of Margaret Allen, Nigel Birch, McKenna Brown, Louanna Furbee, Karen Johnson-Weiner, Tony McEnery, Eugene McKendry, Christopher Moseley, David Nash, Hassan Ouzzate, Jon Reyhner, Jane Simpson, Karl Teeter, Tasaku Tsunoda, Mahendra Verma, Anthony Woodbury and Akira Yamamoto; and the Editors thank them all for timely help in evaluating the abstracts, and their guidance to authors.

The Foundation also thanks the authors of these papers for contributing their work; and all those who by their charitable contributions have strengthened our abilities to act in favour of endangered languages.

¹ *Ogmios* #11 (15 May 1999), p. 16.

² *The Alphabet and the Goddess*. New York/London: Penguin, 1998.

On Native Language Literacy: A Personal Perspective

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I have told the story many times about my almost stumbling into the field of linguistics.

It began with seeing the language I had spoken all of my life, Tohono O'odham, in print. I was around nineteen years old when I first saw my language in books, one a dictionary the other was a collection of traditional stories from my tribe. It was the first time I read about someone writing my language on paper. It was written by a non-O'odham and I wondered, how could that be? In my naivety I did not dwell on the fact that my language had been written down by a non-O'odham instead, with the curiosity of a student perhaps, I attempted to read. I realized later that I was not reading what was written in these books I was merely uttering the O'odham forms. I recall looking at the English gloss and looking at the O'odham form and simply saying the words and not reading. The symbols had no meaning. I played with these books in this manner for some time and then I put them away. It wasn't until a couple of years later that I pulled these two books out again. Today, I sometimes wonder why I chose to go back to these books at that particular time, I have no memory of why I did it, why I chose to want to become literate in my language.

It was in 1975, and I had never met another O'odham tribal member who was literate in O'odham. The two books, *Legends and Lore of the Pima and Papago* and the *Papago & Pima to English Dictionary* both by Dean and Lucille Saxton (1969) were the only samples of printed O'odham I had been exposed to. I also never spoke to another O'odham person about reading and writing in O'odham certainly not to my parents. It was not their world. It was not a thing one asked permission to do, it was harmless, I thought. In the article, "Sociolinguistic Research on Tohono O'odham" with Jane Hill which appeared in *Oral Tradition*, 1998, I document my experience of finding an O'odham language teacher to teach me how to read O'odham. In it I describe my first teacher as a man who had been a missionary among the O'odham in the 1940's and in his missionization efforts chose to learn to speak O'odham. I remember one of the first things he said to me about speaking O'odham was that he spoke O'odham like a woman. This made no sense to me until the first time I heard him utter a large amount

of O'odham. Then I knew clearly what he meant. This, though, is another story. Dr Daniel Matson was the first person to teach me how to read. He taught me the way I remember learning to read English, piece by piece, building the pieces into syllables, words, phrases, sentences. Practice, practice, and repetition.

It did not take long for the symbols, the orthographic system used by the Saxtons to make sense in their books. I could read. I read. I could write, and I wrote. I wrote only for Dr Matson and what I read only he listened to. I was alone I thought. The following semester Dr Matson introduced me to Dr Kenneth Hale. As I describe in mine and Jane's article, Ken was a visiting professor at the University of Arizona at that time. As Dr Matson directed me over to Ken Hale I assumed that I would simply continue to work on my O'odham reading and writing skills, however, little did I realize that it was going to be so much more than just reading and writing, but again that is another story.

One thing I will say about my introductory work with Ken Hale on my literacy efforts was that when he saw the spelling conventions I was using he very subtly introduced me to a different writing system, a system he and Dr Albert Alvarez, an O'odham linguist, had created a few years earlier. He showed me the shortcomings of the Saxton's writing system. The fact that it did not accommodate all of the sound inventory of O'odham. As a non-linguist at the time I took his explanation purely as fact and it was satisfactory. Without hesitation, I adopted the new writing system, currently known as the Alvarez/Hale System. However, my initial introduction and knowledge of the Saxton system remained vital since the only dictionary available in the O'odham language was written in the Saxton system at the time. After a short while I became comfortable with both, though I did my writing primarily in the Alvarez/Hale System.

My purpose in telling of my own personal experience on becoming literate in my first language is to offer some points about what I have learned along the way when dealing with Native speaker communities, in particular, my own, and their efforts either to create and adopt writing systems, or for individuals to progress towards

literacy in their native language. It is my intent as is with many of the presenters at this conference to offer support, advice, and examples in the area of native language literacy development, some successes and some failures. In my twenty-one year experience of teaching and administering the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) I have met a cross-section of tribal people in their efforts to develop literacy among their members. It has been an interesting panorama of programs, strategies, and efforts over these many years.

N-ku'ibadkaj 'ant 'an ols g cewagl.

With my harvesting stick I will hook the clouds.

'Ant o 'i-waññio k o 'i-huđiñ g cewagl.

With my harvesting stick I will pull down the clouds.

N-ku'ibadkaj 'ant o 'i-siho g cewagl.

With my harvesting stick I will stir the clouds.

(Zepeda, 1995)

Simple Joys: Without External Pressure

The scenario I describe about my own experience of becoming literate is of the past, a past that is only some 20 years old. Nonetheless it is the past. It is a scenario that has become more and more rare. I find now that native speakers of native languages choose to become literate out of necessity and out of the urgency of imminent language loss. This was the case shortly after I was proficient enough at reading and writing to be able to teach others. I was approached by other speakers who wanted to learn how to read and write O'odham. These individuals though were interested in becoming literate in order to be employable in the then bustling arena of O'odham bilingual education. As I look back on that era, the 1970's and early '80's I realize the distinction that existed between these new promising literate O'odham individuals and myself. This distinction being based largely on our the reasons for becoming literate. I, as I mentioned earlier had no particular motivation other than perhaps curiosity or desire. For this new, and emerging literate population it was economics. For these individuals the need to become literate was a part of their job description, and in my opinion, there was little immediate joy in the task. The requisite to become literate was primarily mandated by external forces whether it was the school, the district, the tribe or the federal government (see Crawford, 1989). Their path toward literacy was associated with dollar signs, sometimes grades, academic credit, and certainly with the responsibility of assisting young school aged children to make the successful transition into standard English language use.

This particular situation among the O'odham was consistent with many tribes across the country who were

receiving funds for bilingual programs. Bilingual programs made it possible for adults to become literate in their native language practically overnight while at the same time having enough proficiency to be able to implement it in a classroom for monolingual speakers or students with limited English skills. It was an onerous task for many. And sadly, for many of these new literate teachers their literacy skills were ephemeral. It lasted as long as their jobs did, or in some cases as long as their bilingual grants, an average of three years. There were of course some who maintained jobs with schools with multiple years of funding for bilingual programs who today still maintain a very high literacy level. These individuals I have found also utilize their native language literacy skills outside the classroom. That is, they have found additional uses for their skills. Herein lies the joy. These individuals have moved beyond the original mandates to become literate, the mandates are now only a part of their literacy history. Many of these individuals are involved with organizations or occupations that provide ethnographic and culturally specific work for the tribe where literacy in the native language is required. In these positions they have taken advantage of a wide range of mediums including audio recordings, video-taping and archiving with computers the written native language as a medium is always present.

Wirikam Do'ag

Wirikam Do'ag

Lonely Mountain

Wirikam Do'ag

Lonely Mountain.

gan hu si s-ap masma 'an ke:k

Over there it sits so finely.

heg da:m g huhugam o'odham am ki:kahim.

On top of this lonely mountain "the disappeared people" once lived.

(Zepeda, 1982)

Language and Politics

It goes without saying that it is virtually impossible to avoid issues when dealing with American Indian languages. In my own process of literacy development I came to the event with no preconceived ideas. I had no personal stake involved. My teachers were for the most part neutral with only scholarship involved. I accepted their explanations as fact and did not argue. I did question however, but was given satisfactory explanations each time. One factor I believe that was critical to this lack of debate and raising issues was that there were no other native speakers involved. To attempt literacy development or even orthographic development for an unwritten language with more than two speakers there will

inevitably be discussion, debate, arguing.

Based on the experience with the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI)¹ we have concluded that in order for tribal community members to make decisions about literacy development or orthographic systems and other topics dealing with their language that they must go through the discussion, debate, arguing "phase", it is a transition that must be accomplished in order to move on. In the twenty-one years we've taught in the AILDI we have seen this scenario over and over again with a range of languages. This phase of debate and discovery of issues that must be addressed is most critical when tribal members are taking the responsibility of making decisions regarding their language. We have seen slightly different scenarios when there is a linguist involved since often times the linguist is put in the position of "expert" and is not questioned or the other extreme where they are questioned and when debate ensues they may be summarily released of their duties.

Again, based on our work with AILDI we have known tribal groups who have failed to move beyond the discussion phase, some who in fact are still there right now. As a result they have not progressed in their language planning efforts. Often these groups end up with at least two slightly different writing systems to contend with and continued debate about language teaching and promoting literacy. From our experience the discussion, debate is healthy, in our coursework in AILDI we take critical efforts to provide the appropriate information including, linguistic, sociolinguistic, historical and as well as how to take into consideration the cultural and personal factors associated with the task of orthographic development, for instance. We also provide skills and approaches for organizing debate on the topic as well as how to present their findings and proposal to their tribe's governing entity. From our experience we have found it critical to have tribal members practice taking an objective stance with their own language so that they may see things from that perspective. This is not an easy task since language is such an integral part of the speaker's identity, personality, and cultural foundation. This type of activity was bound up in what was then known as, empowerment, a much overused term at the time.

In my opinion, when speakers are provided with the appropriate and practical skills in language development, language planning of which literacy is only facet, the processes can be much more productive and often not so immersed in issues of politics and personality.

¹ For a description of the AILDI, see McCarty, Yamamoto, Watahomigie and Zepeda 1997.

Eda Hukkam Masad

Mat 'eda hukkam 'o su:d g masad,

A quarter moon standing tall,
kut gahu 'u:ɡk o dakad c hab
'o n-neidad

looking down at me,
k hab wud 'a:ga mat o ju:kad si'alim

a rainy tomorrow

(Zepeda, 1982)

Write It and They will Read it.

In 1982 when the University of Arizona Press and Sun Tracks published the collection, *Mat Hekid o Ju:When It Rains: Pima and Papago Poetry*, a reading by the contributors to the collection was organized on the O'odham reservation in the main community of Sells, Arizona.

I recall the event as I helped to put the program together. We invited tribal dignitaries, parents, school children, everyone. We provided a program consisting of a reading by the contributors to the collection, a book signing and refreshments. The reception was a tremendous success. This, to my knowledge was the first reading of O'odham poetry and book signing by O'odham writers ever held on the O'odham reservation. The Press published a limited run of the books, some 3000 copies. Within a year or so the book sold out. Many of the consumers of the book were O'odham tribal members. For many of them, like me some twenty years ago, this was the first time they had seen a significant body of O'odham language in print. I surmised that many of them purchased the book for the novelty value of it. Many educators purchased the book to add to their scant library resources. Relatives of the contributors all purchased books in support. It was phenomenal.

One of the most interesting contrasts made about this thing we were calling at the time, contemporary O'odham poetry, was by an elderly O'odham woman who also happened to be a traditional singer. She said something to the effect, "what you are doing here with the language is like songs, but you are not singing it you are just speaking it." I interpreted this to be very positive as O'odham culture and society considers singers in very high regard. And I personally believe that O'odham people also put in very high regard anyone who has particular skills with language, oral language though. That is, if one is a singer, storyteller, orator, one who can translate from one language to another well or simply has a very good voice they are attributed a certain status. Thus, even though we were writing this new poetry, we were nonetheless, being aesthetic in handling the language which for most

O'dham is always a good thing. And there again is the joy.

The book of poetry the O'dham people purchased were, as some of the contributors came to find, treated in many different ways through the proceeding years. I know in my own parent's household the book that I gave to my father was placed in a box that sits on the saint's table where the St. Francis statue reclines. In other words, it was put in the place of other important family papers and documents. My sisters all had copies, none of them though are literate in O'dham, however they all have favorite pieces in the book but they only read them in English.

Still, in my subsequent work on the O'dham reservation, in particular with a dialect study I met many older speakers who had copies of the book and would remember me from that particular event of the poetry reading. I recall one older woman who when I went to visit her at her home to do an interview was quick to pull out the collection of poetry. To my surprise she opened the book to a particular page and pointed at a word, an O'dham word. And she began to explain that she did not read O'dham but based on the English gloss she wanted to know if this was the word the writer used to mean "grandmother"? I answered in the affirmative. She then began to give me a lecture on the correct forms for the term for grandmother. I pointed out to her that the term the writer used in her poem was a term of endearment, a family term and for some a regions a dialect variation on an endearment term for grandmother. She reluctantly accepted my explanation. While still other O'dham who purchased the book were truly inspired. They read the O'dham, they built on the limited literacy skills they had gained at some point in their lives and were the readers of this little book. They had a sense of the aesthetics of the pieces and were able to discuss them. They talked about reading a particular piece and feeling a connection to the writer and his or her experience. They were the ones who reacted to the sadness in poems and were also the ones who truly appreciated the subtle humor in other pieces. These readers were the ones who wanted more to read more of the same type of writing. These were the readers who along the way chose to write a little themselves using this little book of poems as a model.

It is with a strong dose of reality that I acknowledge that the O'dham who experienced this inspiration and appreciation for the collection is a very small number of people. Initially, with the collection, *Mat Hekid o Ju: When It Rains*, I thought making printed O'dham language available would inspire, arouse curiosity about the written language, so much so, that significant numbers of speakers would be moved to become literate. This has not been the case.

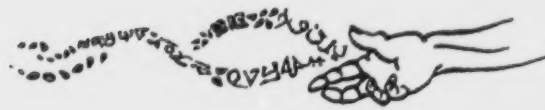
Over the years of being a literate O'dham, I along with the small handful of other literate O'dham continue to write and publish at various points in the O'dham language. The publications typically are on a small scale and for a specific audience. I have personally come to the conclusion that in the case of the O'dham public, they are intrigued by the idea of seeing their language in print, but in general would prefer to have the written text read to them, would prefer to hear the sound of the language.

Ba:ban ganhu ge ci:pia
 Ba:ban ganhu ge ci:pia
 Ba:ban ganhu ge ci:pia
 Kut 'am hema meḍ k 'am ha-kakke
 Kut 'am hema meḍ k 'am ha-kakke.
 Ba:mt o ci:pia.
 Kut 'am hema meḍ k 'am ha-kakke
 Wa ṣa 'an wo:po ṣon oidag

(Zepeda, 1995)

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2

Literacy from Within

A Community's Solution to Some Literacy Problems: The Mayangna of Nicaragua

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Abstract

This paper reports on the efforts by the Mayangna people of Nicaragua to come up with a written language that reflects and respects their uniqueness and difference with respect to (a) the dominant language (Spanish) and (b) the linguistic variation existing within their own communities.

The sections in this paper address the various issues that the community has addressed in this on-going process. Section 1 presents a brief overview of the situation in the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua where the Mayangna live. Section 2 (The Writing System) explains the ways in which, sometimes by chance, the writing system used nowadays got to be decided upon. Section 3 (A Standard for the Written Language) discusses the questions that came about in deciding on whether a standard was needed for the written language and, if so, which variant of the language should be chosen. Section 4 (The Role of the Community) contemplates the interaction of the different forces active in the Mayangna education setting presently. Finally, Section 5 (The Role of Technology) offers some discussion about how technology is being introduced recently and the effects it may have.

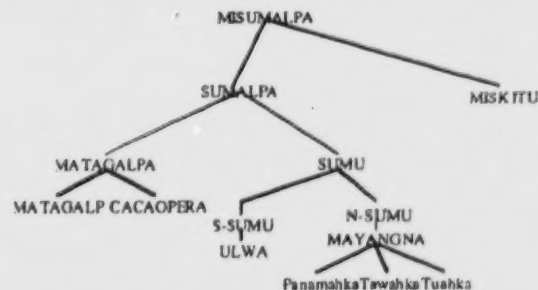
Background

In the mid 80's, during the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, Bilingual Programs were established to attend the indigenous populations of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, a territory where the Spanish speaking population of the Pacific area of the country had had little interaction with. The indigenous populations there were the Miskitu and the Mayangna in the North, the Ulwa in the South, as well as a small number of Rama speakers; the South also has a considerable number of Creole people, and a very small number of Garifuna speakers. Bilingual Programs were established for the Miskitu, the Mayangna (Sumu) and the Creole (English).

Miskitu is the largest indigenous population of the Atlantic Coast. They had historically enjoyed some sort of politically dominant role, due to the military support of the British since the 17th century, and their language had become a *de facto* lingua franca in the area. The military supremacy enjoyed by the Miskitu led to confrontations with the surrounding populations, including the Mayangna who, up to this day, distrust the Miskitu. Most of the Mayangna population, though, is trilingual,

speaking Mayangna, Miskitu and Spanish. (For a study on the linguistic hierarchies in the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, see Norwood 1993.)

Both Miskitu and Mayangna belong to the Misumalpan family, an isolate language group, sometimes claimed to be of Macro-Chibchan origin (Mason 1939, Holt 1975, Campbell 1979; but see also Craig and Hale 1992 for a differing view). Mayangna or Northern Sumu, together with Ulwa, or Southern Sumu, form the Sumu branch of the family. Miskitu is the farthest relative in the family. Mayangna has three currently identified variants: Tuahka and Panamahka in Nicaragua and Tawahka in Honduras.



(1) Misumalpan languages (Benedicto and Hale, 2000)

All three languages have been claimed to have undergone some sort of grammatical merger (see Hale 1997), whereby their grammars share a high proportion of structures.

The Writing System

The writing system that is presently used is the result of sometimes conscious and sometimes fortuitous decisions. Before the Bilingual Program was initiated, there had been some collections of vocabulary but no systematic writing system had been established; the first serious studies of the language, by Lehman (1920) and Conzemius (1929), used a writing system which was never used by the community. With the beginning of the Bilingual Program

in the mid 80's, a preliminary alphabet was established that was used in the first editions of the Bilingual Program books. But it wasn't until Susan Norwood's 1987 grammar that the alphabet was finally established. Such alphabet includes graphemes for the voiceless series for nasals and liquids (*nh, mh, ngh; lh, rh*) and also makes a distinction between long and short vowels (*â, a; î, i; û, u*). The final alphabet is listed in (2) below.

(2) Mayangna Alphabet

a, â, b, d, h, i, î, k, l, lh, m, mh, n, nh, ng, ngh, p, r, rh, s, t, u, û, w, y.

Although this writing system has been in place since 1987 and was officially being used in the bilingual schools, in fact it was being used very irregularly by members of the community whenever Mayangna was written (e.g., when translating some legal texts). One of the complaints from the community was that it had not been widely publicized and that the community had not had a say in the conventions that had been adopted. For that reason, the then head of the Bilingual Program, Eloy Frank, convinced and secured funds from URACCAN (the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast) to conduct the first of a series of workshops intended to reconnect the Bilingual Program with the Mayangna communities, and to share and discuss the ideas the Bilingual Program wanted to implement with respect to the writing system. That first workshop took place in July 1999. The points that were discussed appear in the subsections below.

The Alphabet

In general, points of discussion focused more on the introduction of combinations of graphemes for phonemes that are non-existing in Spanish (such as the voiceless liquids and nasals), rather than in letters that are not used (such as 'c', replaced by 'k') or in graphemes that assume other values (such as 'h').

The Graphemes and Their Names One of the first issues discussed were how many graphemes existed in the Mayangna alphabet. Once it was established how many and which ones, the group proceeded to discuss how to name each ones of those graphemes. The following is a list of the graphemes with the corresponding name:

(3) Graph _____ Name

a	a (parahni)
â	a naini
b	bi
d	dî
h	ah

i	î (parahni)
î	i naini
k	ka
l	il
lh	ilh
m	mi
mh	amh
n	ni
nh	unh
ng	ing
ng	ingh
p	pi
r	ir
rh	arh
s	is
t	ti
u	u (parahni)
û	u naini
w	wa
y	yu

A good portion of the discussion was devoted to finding arguments for the existence of 'new' graphemes such as *lh*; such arguments came in the form of minimal or near-minimal pairs. In the same way that participants were concerned about their language having (at least) the same number of graphemes as the dominant language, Spanish, it was equally surprising for them to discover that Mayangna also had sounds that did not exist in Spanish and for which there was a need for a grapheme. Once the evidence was considered during the meeting, the existence and use of the 'new' grapheme was unanimously accepted.

The Diphthongs Mayangna has both falling and rising diphthongs. In these two cases, it was decided to use *i, u* instead of *y, w*. This had been the source of some contention, since both spellings had been used in the past. Eventually, the reason for choosing one over the other was not one based on any linguistic principle, but rather a wish to mark a difference with Miskitu spelling (which uses *y, w*). Thus, it was decided to write *tualika* and not *tvahka*; *dai* and not *day*.

The use of *y, w* was, thus, reserved for the beginning of syllable: *yang* (not *iang*), *dawi* (not *dau*).

Other Conventions

There were a series of spelling conventions that needed to be established for the sake of consistency, since their spelling had been fluctuating since the mid 80's.

Person Markings Person markings had been analyzed by Norwood (1987) as clitics. She introduced a device to write these elements consisting of joining them to the stem via a hyphen; so, 'I eat' was written *kasta-yang*.

However, this convention never caught on; it was considered cumbersome and adding an extra level of complexity for the learning child. So, most of the time, it was being written as a single word (*kastayang*), and some times as 2 separate words (*kasta yang*). Since no element can ever intervene between the verbal root and the person marking in a verb, it was decided to use the spelling as a single word (*kastayang*).

This solution, however, did not go well with object person markers (object clitics) and with subject person markers with nominal/adjectival predicates. In both cases, there can be an element intervening between the person marker and the root:

- (4) a. *yâ* (bik) *talna*.
 1sObj also see:PST3s
 "He also saw me"
 b. *parasni* (bik) *yang*
 strong also 1sSbj
 "I am also strong"

In these two cases, and given this property, it was decided to write them as two separate words.

Compounds Mayangna is a language that uses compounding profusely. In these cases (as it happens in English), there is considerable variation, from writing the two (or more) units together, to writing the different constituents as separate words each.

In the case of compound verbs, such as *yul baunin* 'to talk', whose meaning has become lexicalized, it was decided to write them separately because object clitics intervene between the two units; thus, *yul yâ bauna* '(he) talked to me'.

Another frequent type of compound is formed with the element *dî* (lit., 'thing'). This type is, however, a heterogeneous group and the conventions adopted depended very much on the peculiarities of each subgroup. If the second element of the compound does not exist on its own, then the compound is written as a single word (e.g., *diauh* 'wild animal' or *dibasta* 'medicinal plant', where *auh* and *basta*, respectively, have no meaning of their own).

In the subtype where *dî* is followed by a verbal form, the situation is a little more complex, and no final decision was obtained. The element *di* can in fact appear as an intransitivizer (in which case the vowel appears as short); in such cases, it alternates with full blown nominal phrases and, thus, there would be a good reason to write it as a separate word (as in (5)).

- (5) a. *Gustavo di kaswi*.
 G. thing eat:PRS3s
 'Gustavo eats'
 b. *Gustavo wakisa kaswi*
 G. banana eat:PRS3s
 'Gustavo eats bananas'

However, in some of these cases, *di* seems to have been lexicalized with the root, as in *di kasna* 'food' or *di îyang* 'hunter' (where *-yang* is the suffix for agent); in some cases, the word has an already established tradition as a single entity (as in *ditalyang* 'wise man, medicine man', lit. 'the one that sees or knows'). In the best scenario, one would like to obtain a solution that is consistent for all cases and based on some principled reason; however, no final agreement was achieved for this case.

A third subtype of compound with *di* involves the inflected form of the word (*digi*), in which case, assuming that the inflected form implies phrasal status, we opted for writing the two elements independently. This case is exemplified by *waspa dîni* 'fish' (lit., 'the thing from inside the river').

Finally, with other types of compounds we followed the general rule based on the degree of lexicalization (if the meaning of a compound becomes lexicalized, then it is written as a single unit). Take, for instance, the two elements *asang* 'mountain' and *pas* 'inside': the phrase *asang pas* (*kau*) 'in(side) the mountain' has a regular, predicted referential meaning. However, the phrase may become lexicalized, and refer abstractly to whatever is not a town, village, or human concentration; in that case, it becomes *asangpas* 'the outdoors'.

Proper Names Another unfinished debate concerns the names for places and people. The question was whether it was appropriate to adapt proper names to the Mayangna spelling system, or to leave them as they had been up to then. Examples of this include *McLean* vs *Maklin*, *Managua* vs *Manawa*.

More complicated are the cases where the Mayangna version of a proper name involves substantial changes. Such is the case with proper names like *Juan* or *Modesto*. In the first case, *j* does not exist in Mayangna; the Nicaraguan Spanish pronunciation of it ([h]) appears in Mayangna only in coda position, not in the onset of the syllable, like in *Juan*. The closest sound is [k]; should the spelling, then, be *Kuan* (as it is sometimes pronounced)? A similar dilemma arises with *Modesto*: since Mayangna does not have the mid vowels *e, o*, should the name be spelled *Mudistu* (an alternative that the participants found quite amusing)?

Although the discussion was creative and lively, no final conclusion was obtained in this respect.

The Aftermath

The general feeling at the end of the meeting was of satisfaction. Although relatively few concrete points had been agreed upon, the meeting constituted an attempt at maintaining a closer relationship between the technical staff of the Bilingual Program and the members of the community they serve.

As a follow up of the meeting, it was agreed that a report of the meeting would be written (which it was), and a copy sent to all the participants so that they would share the results with the members of their respective communities. At the end of a reasonable period, another meeting would be called for, to collect the feedback from the communities and to try to obtain some more agreements.

A year after that meeting, however, the project was inactive. The head of the PEBI-Sumu had changed and no action was being taken to follow up on the initiative. It is not clear either whether the participants did in fact share the results of the meeting with other members of their community. This would have required a good amount of organization and resources, and there was no further coordination for the project nor further funds were committed to it. The success of the project at the community level depends, ultimately, on the existence of a strong (local) leadership and the availability of funds for the follow-up activities.

A 'Standard' for the Written Language

The need for choosing a 'standard' for the written language is an issue still under debate among the Mayangnas, especially in Nicaragua. Mayangna now has (as far as it has been possible to determine¹) three dialectal variants: Tuahka and Panamahka in Nicaragua, and Tawahka in Honduras. In Nicaragua, the variant used at the beginning of the Bilingual Program was the majority variant Panamahka. However, Tuahka speakers, though smaller in number, were always extremely vocal in demanding that their variety also be recognized. This has enormous consequences, since, for instance, it would require that Tuahka also be used in the Bilingual textbooks.

¹ Within the last six months, the Bilingual Program team has established contact with another Mayangna group in the Jinotega area, who seems to present a certain degree of variation with respect to both the Panamahka and the Tuahka variants of Nicaragua. The extent of the variation has not yet been determined.

The fact that the phonological systems of the variants are quite similar, and that the dialectal variation is restricted to some lexical choices and to the morphology, facilitates the solution that is being explored right now: decide on a spelling system that is common to both variants (a task relatively easy, since the phonological system does not present a great deal of variation), and let each group use their own variant in writing.

The arguments leading to this position have to do with the sociological effects that establishing a 'standard' have on the then non-standard varieties. Choosing one of the variants of a language as the 'standard' for that language ends up, rightfully or not, implying in the mind of the speakers that the other variants are not 'right', are not 'adequate', are not of the same value. These associated values, which have very little linguistic base, end up percolating the social tissue of a community, creating division and mistrust.

A solution that recognizes the intrinsic value of every variant and that no single variant, per se, is superior to another from a linguistic point of view, can in fact act as an element strengthening the social tissue of the community. By being inclusive rather than exclusive, such an approach can promote mutual knowledge and respect, not just mere tolerance of 'the other'.

It is well-known that the reasons that in other parts of the world have led to the establishment of a 'standard' have more to do with politics and armies than with any purely linguistic reason. There is no apparent reason, thus, to reproduce those same patterns in societies where literacy is developing.

In an effort to show that an inclusive approach is a feasible alternative, and to bring it to practice, a series of educational material has been created that include both variants, Tuahka and Panamahka. Among them, a First Book for kindergarten children and a Children's Dictionary are about to be published. These two publications include the Tuahka and the Panamahka words for the images depicted. A collection of Women's Stories has just been published, which includes life stories of both Panamahka and Tuahka women, each one written in its own variant. This may be one of several reading books for more advanced readers. Other collections of folktales and oral stories are also underway following the same philosophy. Classroom activities may be directed towards comprehension of the lexicon that is different in each variant, and towards mutual knowledge of the cultural contents of, say, the oral stories cycles (which are different for Tuahkas and Panamahkas).

The advantages of such an approach can already be seen in

the interaction between the different members of the working teams (which include Tuahka and Panamahka): it is changing attitudes and stereotypes through knowledge of the cultural reality of the 'other'. Hopefully, the process that is taking place within the working teams will reproduce within the society at large.

The role of the community

It is perhaps a bit confusing and even misleading to talk about the community as an homogeneous group. Different sectors have different interests, like in any society, and these show up in the discussions and the type of arguments provided. The interactions that took place in this meeting (and, reportedly, in other meetings in the past) manifested this diversity and showed what at first sight were unexpected interactions.

The forces active in these discussions can be identified as: the technical staff in the Bilingual Program (PEBI); the teachers in the Bilingual Program; the elders and traditional leaders in the community; parents; (young) community leaders; the students; the linguist.

The technical staff in the Bilingual Program (PEBI), a team of indigenous education leaders, had been introducing the writing system in schools for over some 10-15 years. It was widely used by indigenous teachers in the communities' schools. However, as I have already pointed out, parents and other concerned community people felt that there had not been sufficient communication between PEBI and the communities.

During the July 1999 workshop, a very curious phenomenon arose as a result, probably, of the different groups represented there and their different interests: while the elders and parents are very supportive of PEBI's innovations and applaud PEBI's initiatives, younger middle-aged leaders resist them, some times quite forcefully. For example, one of the arguments against introducing 'new' graphemes (that is, different from the ones existing in the dominant language, Spanish) was that children would then know and use letters that the parents did not know about. Counterarguments offered that, while it was not a good situation that the parents did not know what the children were being taught, the best approach to solve it was to educate the parents, rather than not educating the children.

Although the reaction by the younger generation of leaders was in principle surprising, it may actually be a reflection of the structure of power (or the fight for it) within the dynamics of the communities. This power struggle may work in different ways: if decisions are taken by PEBI technical staff (roughly of the same age as the younger generation of leaders) without the participation of the younger leaders, that may weaken the position of such

leaders in the community (since they are also political leaders, that may have disastrous consequences for them politically). Additionally, PEBI's technical staff as well as a good number of bilingual teachers are involved in a bachelors degree on bilingual education (conducted by URACCAN University), which the younger political leaders do not attend. This also may create an imbalance of power, since now PEBI's technical staff and bilingual teachers will have a college degree that sanctions them, and not the political leaders, as 'experts' on education matters. Their (political) leadership can, thus, also be challenged, especially in a society where having a university degree (and even a high school diploma) is still a privilege that very few enjoy.

The 'assembly' character of the meeting, though, which is a typical way of interaction in Mayangna society, allows for a way to obtain concrete agreements. All those presented in the first section were agreed upon by the whole assembly, including the young political leaders.

The role of the linguist in this context was to provide the linguistic information relevant for the context. For example, with respect to the fear that Mayangna be a 'lesser' language than Spanish, if it didn't have the same letters in the alphabet or if it had a lower number, the function of the linguist was to explain that different languages have different sets of phonemes (and thus, different sets of graphemes), and to show that Mayangna had in fact 'more' sounds that did not exist in Spanish (such as, e.g., *mh*, *nh*, *ngh*, etc...).

The Role of Technology

The position of technology within Mayangna society is quite variable. Most of the Mayangna population lives in rural communities, with no easy access (either by road or by river) from the closest mestizo towns; most of them (as was the case for the surrounding mestizo towns up until recently), do not have electricity. However, a growing number of students is attending secondary school and college and, thus, are having a certain degree of access to technology. The younger generation of college students is very likely to have had some sort of computer training, and some may even be quite knowledgeable users of, say, computer equipment. The technical staff in PEBI has practically no computer training.

On the other hand, as a result of various linguistic projects being underway, the members of the different linguistic teams (all teachers in the Bilingual Program and students in the Bachelor Degree for Bilingual Education) became quite familiar with the use of tape recorders and photographic cameras. Once the material for these linguistic projects (collections of women's stories,

collections of oral traditions, different kinds of vocabularies and dictionaries for children) had been collected, the matter of preparing those data for publication came up and with it the question of who, how and where was to prepare those materials (a step that involved the use of technology, at least inasmuch as computers were involved).

The two ideas that were central to these discussions were those of empowerment and self-sufficiency. The materials could be processed at either of the two institutions that were backing the linguistic projects: URACCAN in Nicaragua and Purdue University in the US. However, such a solution would do little to change the situation of dependency that the community was in for the production of educational material. It was agreed, then, by all the parts implicated, that a program that would train a group of educators and PEBI staff on the necessary technology (mostly, computer use) would be more desirable. Initially, and as part of a small cooperation project between URACCAN and Purdue University, two computers were installed in the office of PEBI in the mestizo town of Rosita, and basic training was provided. These computers have been working since, approximately, July 1999.

At the same time, Rosita is a mestizo town which is between 1 to 3 hours away from the Tuahka communities, and some 10 hours from the main Panamahka communities, where most members of the linguistic teams lived and worked. This situation made the initial goal of staff training quite a challenging one; besides, it created the association of (technological) development with the mestizo town and promoted, maybe, the exit of some of the better teachers away from the communities (and into the mestizo towns). As a result, a new strategy is being developed which tries to bring technology to the people (as opposed to bringing the people to technology).

This new approach implies providing some 6 to 8 computers to the main communities where the members of the linguistic teams live and work, in an attempt to not separate the technical staff from the community which they serve. Such approach has to confront a variety of logistical problems, not the least of which is how to provide electricity. One of the communities already has electricity and two other are scheduled to have solar panels by October 2000. The members of the team will also need specific training on the use of the machines. Although in principle this is an option that seems to be welcome by the community (eager to also have access to training and, thus, to better paying jobs), the long term effects on the life of the community remain to be seen. However, it is up to the members of the community to decide whether they want to take up such a challenge or not, a decision

that is not simple, since Mayangna society, like ours, manifests a variety of opinions about the benefits and/or disadvantages of technology.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due, in the first place, to the members of the Mayangna communities who have collaborated and helped in the projects under way; to the teachers and students in the Bilingual Program; and to URACCAN University for facilitating resources, material and solidarity.

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Pathway to an Acceptable Orthography

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Abstract

The Tuscarora Nation is presently situated in the western end of New York State and is one of the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, or Haudenosaunee, as we call ourselves. We are part of the Younger Brothers, along with the Cayuga, and Oneida; the Older Brothers comprised of the Mohawk, Seneca and Onondaga. Traditionally, it is believed that at one time all the six nations were of one language group, the Iroquoian Language family. Subsequent migrations south divided the nations and dialectical differences followed. Today there is less than a handful of fluent speakers remaining and the language is near a fateful death.

The Tuscarora Language Committee is a grassroots, volunteer group of Tuscarora Nation residents dedicated to the revitalization and restoration of the Tuscarora language.

A primary goal of the Committee at its inception was to develop a consistent, useful, and practical orthography for a language reduced to four or five fluent speakers, a system which would serve the ordinary Tuscarora citizen in a user-friendly fashion, and also be compatible with formal linguistic style. The journey towards that goal will be represented here, and you will be taken on the pathway that leads to an acceptable orthography.

The Legend

According to Tuscarora legend, the gift of speech was given to our people by a bird that was the guardian of a white tree with hundreds of branches covering the entire earth. All the people living beneath the tree spoke one language until the bird sent all kinds of different languages to the people below as it perched on the various branches, and so our language was born. Of course, no mention was ever made of the bird being able to read or write, and so it is traditional that from time immemorial, stories and legends are transmitted orally. Writing of the Tuscarora language was, and to some extent still is, regarded suspiciously and with some consternation, especially by the elders.

Out of necessity, the dominant society has taken us into the written world, our children have learned to rely on the eyes to read, more so than the ears to hear.

Attempts to Standardize

There have been many linguists (non-Native) who have attempted to devise writing systems for Tuscarora. As early as the late seventeenth century, John Lawson recorded vocabulary, and "more than sixteen investigators have worked with more than twenty-seven speakers to record and preserve the language" (Rudes, 1999). Most notable in this list is John Napoleon Brinton Hewitt (1858-1937), a Tuscarora self-educated linguist. J.N.B. Hewitt was meticulously accurate in regards to the inclusion of glottal stops and accent. Although his dictionary was never completed, his legacy remains through the works of others. Many others have come and studied the language, each one developing their own style of writing and their own interpretation of Tuscarora sounds. There have been no Tuscarora born linguists until J.N.B. Hewitt, who was of the White Bear Clan, and myself, also of the same clan. During the mid-1900's, the language was slowly diminishing in importance as the non-Native society impacted the educational system in the form of boarding schools. The language was reduced from the mother tongue to occasional use, and was not intergenerational or taught to babies.

In 1970, when New York State "allowed" the Tuscarora language to be taught at the Tuscarora Indian School here on the Nation territory, Mrs. Marjorie Printup undertook the great and ominous task of preparing lessons in the language to teach over one hundred children a day. She devised her own orthography, using the English alphabet to represent Tuscarora sounds and combination of sounds. Mrs. Printup was fairly consistent, but at times, throughout the years her system would vary somewhat. Although it was understandable and serviceable, it was lacking in specificity and exactness in regards to placement of glottal stops, lengthened vowels, stress and aspiration. This was totally understandable, as Mrs. Printup was a fluent Tuscarora speaker, growing up in a home where English was not taught.

As was proven with time, the oral presentation of the language could not be surpassed. For the twenty-three years that Mrs. Printup taught, her system was dutifully employed in her teaching, even though she herself constantly stressed the *importance* of writing it "however you hear it." The problem surfacing with such advice is one of longevity. It is only as efficient as long as you remember what letters you used to represent what sounds, and if you are able to annunciate the word the same way you heard it to begin with. Reading someone else's transcription is another matter altogether. How do you know if a is as in cat or ball? If the glottal stop is omitted, are you saying, "stop" or do you mean "ten"? A goal of an ideal orthography is one that allows you to write, put the writing away for some period of time, pick it up again and have no problem reading your writing correctly.

The First Steps

Step One

Following the harsh realization that the Tuscarora language was on the threshold of extinction, the Tuscarora Language Committee set out on a journey that would prove to be exhausting yet rewarding. As with any journey, the first step is the most important. The birth of the Language Committee came in the fall of 1996, after my completion of the summer program at the American Indian Language Development Institute at the University of Arizona. Our final project was to develop a language revitalization proposal for our own individual language groups. Upon returning home to the Reservation and presenting my proposal to our Chiefs in Council, the Language Committee was approved and a group of Nation residents was selected. Included in this dedicated group are young people, elders, professionals and everyday community workers, all on a volunteer basis; the first step was complete.

Step Two

One of our priorities was to establish a questionnaire to determine language attitudes of the community. It was agreed that the overwhelming majority was quite aware of the seriousness of the situation, all were cognizant of the fact that we are in a 'now-or-never' position, and as today's society dictates, the many that wanted to learn had no time to spare for organized language classes.

Questions on orthography were met with somewhat more ambiguousness. Although the majority answered "important" to the question: "How important is a

standardized method of writing the Tuscarora Language to you?" less than half of respondents answered "very important". Some were totally satisfied with the way it has been and seemed to feel that it was not an important issue at all; fortunately there weren't any "don't care" answers. We took this as a definite sign of the need to expose the community to the written form of Tuscarora, and set out to accomplish that goal. We have since increased language visibility on the Nation territory with community signs and various projects, using our orthography.

Important Considerations

Determining the most efficient and useful orthography for a language takes careful thought and consideration, and knowledge as to exactly what are the priorities at hand. For us, one priority was that of time. Knowing that the Creator has only given us our elders as resources for a certain length of time, we needed to act prudently and proficiently.

Questions we needed to ask ourselves:

1. Do we utilize the English alphabet or develop our own symbols?
2. Will the outcome be acceptable and non-threatening to our elders as well as to our younger generation?
3. Are we looking for keyboard adaptation or will we need special fonts and diacritics?
4. If literacy is an eventual goal, with this be acceptable to publish?
5. How do we "bridge" the gap between the formal linguistic style recorded in past dictionaries and publications and an every day, usable, likeable form?
6. How do we not force an approved orthography on learners, but show the need for consistency and standardization?

The Heart of the Journey

Knowing that time was of the essence, I had previously been in consultation with another Iroquoian linguist, Reg Henry, a Cayuga from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, Canada. Reg and I went over the Tuscarora vowels and consonants and we did some comparisons between Tuscarora and Cayuga. Some time had past and again I discussed the possibility of developing an orthography with another Iroquoian linguist, Marianne Mithun. Marianne worked extensively with Chief Elton Greene and had developed the Tuscarora Grammar (1976). We devised a basic system, one that would

allow learners to forego complicated linguistic rules, and for the most part, would not be as foreboding as all the technical writings. It was time for the fine-tuning.

In my many years of teaching the adult language learner, I have witnessed more than a few times that a professional publication was tossed aside amidst sighs of confusion. At one time I was also one of those intimidated by all those little squiggles, dits and dots, and I also questioned the need for something so complex. It took some time teaching before I realized what was missing was some sort of standardization. In this one case, "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" was in order. If they could learn our language by using all those squiggles, dits and dots, then we could, too.

The Presentation

Step Three

In presenting the initial orthography to the Tuscarora Language Committee, I constantly reiterated the importance of being consistent and the benefits of standardization. The most disbelieving of the group were the elders. They have managed for all these years without a Tuscarora alphabet, and are no worse for the trouble. They were "too old" to learn anything so new and confusing. They were somewhat suspicious of writing and taping in general, so it would be understandable that they would not embrace this scheme with open arms. The rest of the Committee was in agreement, yes, we need to have a writing system, but I'm afraid some may have had second thoughts after seeing a few written examples. "Eeek! I can't read *that*!" Back to step three.

Shortly after the time Marianne and I began to develop the orthography, I was teaching students at the Tuscarora Indian School, Kindergarten through sixth grade, and decided there was neither better time or place to introduce the new alphabet. It had always been my policy not to start the children off with reading and writing the Tuscarora language, but rather listening and speaking, the most natural method of learning a language, and the least confusing to their newly developed English writing skills. The ability to read and write Tuscarora wasn't introduced until about the fourth grade, when cognitive skills permit discrimination in writing the two languages. It was not difficult for the students to catch on, those who excelled in the oral component also excelled in the written, and as with any unfamiliar concept, there were the inevitable mistakes and moments of confusion. The most difficult was the letter *theta* (θ), used for the English *th* sound. Since Tuscarora is the only one

of the Haudenosaunee languages to have the fricative *th*, it is important in writing to distinguish that particular sound from the writing of a morpheme ending in a *t* and the next beginning with an *h*. In an attempt to read one of the other five languages, an obvious error would be made in pronunciation. Marianne Mithun and Blair Rudes have previously used the Greek letter, theta, and have utilized the same in published works. But to my students, it was a totally foreign concept, and difficult to master. Today, the language teachers in the school language program are still not teaching it. Another decision was to keep the *k* for the obvious sound it makes and for the sound of a *hard g*. It may have seemed the better choice to use a *g* when the word begins or contains a *hard g* sound, but our English conditioning tells us that sometimes a *g* can also sound like a *j* in certain environments. Therefore it is not difficult to have to remember a rule: if *k* is followed by a vowel or *y* or *w*, then it sounds like *gale* and like *kale* elsewhere.

In some instances, it is just as easy to write the same letter for the sound it makes. For example, *t* and *d*, where in English there is no confusion or variations, we have used the same sounds for Tuscarora. To make the alphabet more adaptable to the typical keyboard configuration (although the ideal situation is to have the font, which has been developed specifically for Iroquoian languages) we have also replaced the $\tilde{c}$ with the *j* or the *ch*, depending on the environment.

One of the sounds in Tuscarora that has no English equivalent is the nasal vowel, ϵ , as in *h i n t*. One consideration was to use the symbol *v*, as Mithun has used in the past and as one of the other languages use. The final decision was to keep the ϵ , because of its use in the Tuscarora-English, English-Tuscarora Dictionary (Rudes, 1999). We felt that the introduction of this letter, which is so common in Tuscarora, would help ease the transition.

The glottal stop has remained the same, $ʔ$ as well as $ʔ$, an acceptable alternate; the symbol for length may also be represented as a colon (:).

There are several other variations, the point being that we have instituted an orthography to act as a "bridge" between formal linguistics and the everyday learner. When the Creator has taken the last of our fluent speakers, all we will have left is dictionaries and references to turn to. Will we be able to open them up and read with confidence or will we close them back up with a defeatist's sigh? That is up to us, but with an orthography that is

designed to complement and work together with the linguistic style, we will persevere.

Through these efforts, we have made a compromise and we are able to look back over our steps with feelings of accomplishment and a sense of respect to our ancestors that at one time took punishment for speaking their mother-tongue.

The Final Steps

There are many goals that the Language Committee has set before them. Self-continuation of the language is one. We need words for new technology and modern conveniences, the same as the generations before us needed to develop new vocabulary for the strange and unusual sights they encountered as the non-Native society surrounded them. That is how a language grows, how it keeps from becoming antiquated and stagnant. With our writing system we will be able to meet that goal, with determination and confidence.

Another goal is to develop publications in Tuscarora, in the form of children's books and literature, encompassing traditional stories and legends for our future speakers. This will allow even our youngest to be read bedtime stories in Tuscarora.

Whatever goals we may set for our language revitalization and restoration, we have conquered a major obstacle and have made the pathway less burdensome for those to follow. Yet, we have not come to the finish, our pathway will take us still farther along. There will be obstacles, detours, maybe even a few potholes now and then, and we are fully prepared.

One of the finest compliments we have seen since instituting the orthography was when one of our elders who seems to be the "doubting Thomas" of the speakers was actually willing to use the dictionary and be able to find a word. Another instance is an elder, who had a mediocre lukewarmness for the written words of Tuscarora, decided that it was important to start writing down words that she could remember. The fact that she still has not accepted the orthography and uses her own system is not as important as the fact that she is actually writing down important words and phrases, another step forward.

The Final Step

The work of the Tuscarora Language Committee will continue to be endless. Whether language loss is defeated and the language is revived is up to our

people and will not totally depend on orthographies, dictionaries, videos or computers. These are merely the stepping stones upon which we can rely, the solid ground for the strides towards revitalization.

Mrs. Printup was a beloved and caring Tuscarora language teacher, devoted to her students and her pathway on Mother Earth. One of her favorite gems of wisdom to share was, "Leave good tracks", something the Tuscarora Language Committee has been committed to as we take steps forward for the language and the future of our culture. Nya:weh.

Technology, Literacy and Orality: the Case of the Coeur d'Alene Language

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Abstract

Technology has both helpful and destructive potential for teaching endangered languages. Its use could cause a shift between the use of literacy and orality in learning languages. This paper focuses on the case of the Coeur d'Alene language. It is a report of preliminary results from a technology class conducted on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation. The goals of this class were to find effective ways to use the computer to renew the language and to examine whether or not it would affect the importance of literacy in revitalization efforts. Although there were fewer students in the class than anticipated this study will surely influence future plans to integrate Coeur d'Alene language instruction with technology.

Potential of Technology

The computer has a varying amount of potential for language revitalization. It has that ability to produce an interesting, media rich learning environment. However, it is most likely easier for it to be sterile and uninspiring. For this reason, one must take careful steps towards the goal of integrating technology with the instruction of endangered languages. A misstep could be destructive, but the situation often calls for moving quickly. With this in mind I set out to create a computerized means to teach the Coeur d'Alene language, or to take at least a step in that direction.

Coeur d'Alene Language Background

Coeur d'Alene is an Interior Salish language, traditionally spoken by the people of the same name. At present this tribe has a reservation in northern Idaho on part of their pre-contact territory. This is where language renewal efforts are concentrated.

While the majority of indigenous languages are threatened by colonial languages, the Coeur d'Alene language is an extreme case. Today there are about five fluent speakers,

all of whom are eighty or more years old. None of them are monolingual Coeur d'Alene, and all of them speak English. Not all of them are active in language revitalization efforts and there are varying degrees of activity among those who are.

Lawrence Nicodemus is among these fluent speakers and busies himself with a number of Coeur d'Alene language programs that is surprising for his age. He has been involved in such programs for his entire life. In the process of producing a set of Coeur d'Alene dictionaries in 1975 he developed a writing system for the language that is basically phonemic and easily typed on a conventional keyboard (Wagner 1997).

The Nicodemus alphabet has since become a centerpiece in teaching Coeur d'Alene. Many materials teaching the language have used it (i.e. Nicodemus 1975a, Nicodemus 1975b, Nicodemus et al. 2000a & Nicodemus et al. 2000b). The alphabet's use in three current language renewal efforts also demonstrates this point. The Keepers of Our Language is a weekly, competitive class, which uses this orthography in handouts of conversations, vocabulary and accompanying worksheets. Literacy based on this alphabet is also central to Coeur d'Alene classes at the local high school and college branch.

All these classes lay claim to a good level of authenticity by having fluent elders on hand. Their presence demonstrates support for the class as well as putting the most definitive information about Coeur d'Alene at the disposal of the facilitator(s) and students. Often this is most crucial with issues of pronunciation and vocabulary.

In the absence of these elders, while at home or otherwise outside of class, the occasional tape recording can assist students of the language with listening skills and pronunciation. However, the computer provides a user interface with many advantages over tape players. Quality is one factor. Another example is that a student wanting to hear a specific word an indefinite number of times will constantly have to hit "stop", "rewind" and "play" if

using a tape. A student using a computer would simply have to click a button or word on the screen.

Of course, it is most likely that more people have access to a tape player than a computer but it is a fact that many on the reservation have access to a computer sometime during the day. Making a Coeur d'Alene language program available in offices on the reservation could be a solution to scheduling problems that traditional language classes have encountered.

A Class in Technology

The purpose of this research was to discover aspects of computer programs that were most effective for teaching the Coeur d'Alene language. In order to do this I sought to teach a technology class to high school students on the reservation. These students would have preferably taken at least a year of the Coeur d'Alene classes at the high school or at least intended to take it. Experience with the language was important because for the final project in this class students would apply what they had learned by creating a sample Coeur d'Alene language lesson on the computer. Professional language instruction software would be assessed in class to provide examples of designs for their projects and reveal what they found effective and ineffective in these programs. Beside these important components of the class students would learn to use and become comfortable with the equipment needed to create their Coeur d'Alene lessons.

To serve another purpose of the research student critiques of programs and their projects would be examined for how much literacy or orality were emphasized. For example, one of the language programs to be critiqued was mostly a screen full of text with a small picture in one corner. This had a much heavier emphasis on literacy than programs which were much more like games.

Another source of important data would be students journals. Each day of class the students would be given a question or a topic on which to write a paragraph or two. The purpose being to further illuminate opinions on orality and literacy as well as effective user interface.

Shaping Teaching Styles and Expectations

Miller Cleary and Peacock (1998) provided insights on teaching Native American students that shaped how I would conduct the class and the outcomes I would expect. They noted the importance of working cooperatively (Miller Cleary and Peacock 1998), therefore I planned to have students work in groups on their projects. Since I was told to expect around six students working in pairs or groups of three seemed most feasible. The utility of learning by example and becoming comfortable with an activity before engaging in it was also emphasized (Miller Cleary and Peacock 1998). This suggests teaching by example and similar instructional strategies, but also led to the expectation that students would like programs that provided practice and incorporate examples and practice opportunities into the lessons that they developed. Studies suggested that many American Indian students learn visually (Miller Cleary and Peacock 1998). Orality is also considered more beneficial than written

communication in learning (Miller Cleary and Peacock 1998). I expected student projects to reflect these tendencies.

Changes in Class Structure

The class was supposed to have met Monday through Friday for three weeks, two hours a day and involve about four to six students. For the first week, starting June 12, 2000, I had one student. The next week two other students attended but on only two days were more than one of them there and never more than two. After that my only student was one of those that had arrived the second week. For her the class turned into an apprenticeship, which lasted until late July. We met most days for the appointed couple of hours but some days she could not because of conflicts with her job.

Fortunately for me, this lone student, Audra Vincent, was a fast learner and determined to teach the language. Several of the teachers at the high school commented on her academic excellence and dedication. Tribal elder Lawrence Nicodemus often spoke favorably of her and her drive to learn the language. She has taken both years of the high school Coeur d'Alene Language classes and would be a teaching assistant for one of them this coming school year.

Language Computer Programs

This class resulted in examinations of computer programs and plans for programs, which could be broken into three divisions. One was a pre-existing Coeur d'Alene language program with which Audra had nine years of experience. The second consisted of a group of four foreign language programs examined in class. The last portion were the programs that she and I designed.

Tribal School Language HyperCard Stack

Audra attended the Coeur d'Alene Tribal School for all of her years of schooling up through eighth grade. This is the highest grade level taught there. The school has a HyperCard stack, which teaches the Coeur d'Alene language. It has been there for as long as she can remember.

The pages of the stack are black and white with vocabulary words or sentences in boxes. The user clicks on the words to hear them said with recordings of Lawrence Nicodemus. He or she has the option of hearing the word or sentence in Coeur d'Alene alone or followed by the English translation. A small box in the middle of the screen shows a line drawing representing vocabulary words.

Students were supposed to use this program everyday. There was a set amount of time during their daily computer class for working with the Coeur d'Alene language stack. It seemed as if less and less time was allotted for this purpose over the years. When my student graduated from eighth grade she said that about ten minutes a day were spent with the stack. Besides needing to work on that specific stack this time was unstructured

and students received no human instruction in Coeur d'Alene.

At times, elders fluent in the language taught a few classes on it, but for the most part, this stack was and is the only source of instruction in the language at the school. The high school Coeur d'Alene classes have taken time out of class to provide some instruction in the language at younger grade levels in the local public schools. This instruction did not include the Tribal School because it is a half hour drive from the public high school, while the other schools are in the same town or only five miles away. It was the hope of my student that the high school classes could somehow visit the Tribal School to teach them Coeur d'Alene this year.

My student said that she learned very little Coeur d'Alene from the HyperCard stack. She had learned a few vocabulary words by her graduation but felt it was too hard for her to get to much out of the conversations. The sentences in these conversations were not broken down into their component affixes and roots and their grammatical structure was not touched on.

The design of the stack was not very compelling for my student. The black and white color scheme did not seem very inspiring to her and was a sharp contrast to the colorful pages that she later put together for her computerized lessons. Also, the English speaking voice was not emotional to her.

According to Audra, it was not uncommon for students at the Tribal School to develop a bad attitude about the Coeur d'Alene language as a result of this stack and the way it was used. I assume that the design elements discussed above had a lot to do with this, but she emphasized the fact that students had to use the stack and yet had no human instruction in the language.

Critique of Foreign Language Programs

In the course of this class we also examined some foreign language programs. I wanted to look at languages that she had no experience with, which was not a problem because, besides English, she had only studied Coeur d'Alene. We looked at programs teaching Russian, Spanish, Italian and German.

I was familiar with these programs and walked her through them to some point. This was done to save time, try to get reactions to specific design elements of the user interface and to provide some structure for the activity.

I instructed Audra to keep a few questions in mind as we used these programs. For one, I wanted to know how successful she thought the exercise was at teaching her the language. How much did she feel like she was learning? She was also to think about what was making it a successful or unsuccessful learning experience. Another important question was how fun it was. How long could she play it before she got bored? These questions were put forth before starting our assessment of the programs as some guidelines to what I wanted her to notice, but more

specific questions were sometimes used while we were examining the programs.

Keep in mind that the following are in no way professional reviews of these programs. We spent only one two hour session of our class examining them. The point was not to get familiar with the programs for their own sakes but to gain insight on the effectiveness of some types of computer exercises in teaching a language

Russian We critiqued a Russian language program called *Learn Russian Now!* first. This program had several different options at the main menu but we only took time to look at the most fundamental of those choices. The layout for this section was practically a screen full of text in a multitude of text boxes. The largest one gave choices for lessons to work of and scrolled down to groups of sentences. These focused on individual vocabulary words. Below these were conversations using these words. Words and sentences could be heard orally at different speeds.

One box gave the translation of words and sentences presented in the largest one, while others gave declensions or conjugations of words where appropriate and offered links to grammatical explanations. There was little in the way of graphics except pictures of faces that would pop up in a small box during conversations.

This was the least favorite of the programs we examined. One of the problems with it was the lack of pictures. Audra felt that more graphics would have made her more interested. Another problem was the layout of the page. She found navigating through the program confusing and difficult with nothing there to catch her attention.

One thing that she really enjoyed about this program was that it could compare a sound wave of her voice with that of a native speaker. The user could repeat after a recording of a native speaker and record their voice. Then these voices were played, both with accompanying sound waves. She also liked a dial on this part that would rate your pronunciation.

Spanish Next we looked at *Success in Spanish*. The main menu and the menus at the beginning of lessons consisted of a lot of text in English, much of it explaining what to do. On the lesson pages a person could select an exercise which provided practice on material followed by a game assessing what had been learned. Before getting to these exercises a help screen appeared which contained a lot of explanation of what to do. There was an option of not showing these help screens every time one entered a game, but each exercise we used was defaulted to show them.

The practice pages basically consisted of a list of sentences in Spanish with a picture to one side. These pictures gave context clues, providing a basis for figuring out what the sentence meant without resorting to the optional English translation at the bottom of the page. Each time a sentence was clicked a recording would play and the picture in the box would change to correspond. After sufficient practice one could test his or her skills in a game. In some of these games a sentence was spoken and four pictures were presented on the page. These were

taken from the pictures that were shown before. The player had to click on the picture that corresponded with what was said.

Audra had favorable and unfavorable reactions to aspects of this program. It was hard to navigate on the main menu and the lesson menus because they were congested with text and it was not immediately obvious what she should do. The help boxes were also a little too helpful. She thought it would have been all right to have the option to get help if you wanted it but she was discouraged from going on with the program if it seemed so hard that it required all that explanation to continue.

The games and accompanying practice pages were redeeming factors of this program. Audra liked the challenge of using the pictures to try to unlock the meanings of the sentences. She often mentioned the importance of activities that make you think in language learning and this is a good example of such an activity on the computer. I encouraged her to get at the meanings of individual words by breaking down sentences that were very similar. She seemed to enjoy these challenges although she was not always successful at determining the meaning of a sentence or word.

Italian and German The last two programs we examined were both part of the *Instant Immersion* series. *Talk Now! Italian* was geared towards beginners, while *World Talk German* was for intermediate speakers. The aspects of these programs that are important for this study are the same so they are assessed together here.

The main menu for these programs was like a pie. A circle was split up into different pieces, which when clicked on, went to exercises focused on different subjects. For example "foods" or "phrases". The menu that this led to gave the user the opportunity to practice for and play games and check pronunciation. These games often involved hearing part of a conversation and having to choose the corresponding picture out of a group of three. The player kept choosing until he or she got the right answer and was given a certain number of points depending on how soon that was. For much of the program hosts would say sentences and words and tell the user whether he or she chose the right answer. These hosts were animated and overall these programs were very rich in graphics. Speaking in the target language in these programs was accompanied by writing in the language less so than the Russian and Spanish programs.

These programs received the best response from Audra. She liked the fact that there were a lot of graphics and that you learned that language through games. She emphasized the need for making the learning process fun in order to keep people interested. In her opinion these programs were the most fun and the most helpful.

Our Program Designs

I had originally planned to use authoring software in the class to make our lessons. This fell by the wayside for lack of funds and we used Microsoft PowerPoint instead. This program was convenient because it is on almost

every computer on the reservation, therefore what ever we created could be used by a great number of people. We used this program on both Windows machines at the Department of Education and Macintosh computers at the Tribal School. Other software and hardware were used to acquire graphics and sounds but PowerPoint had the most influence on lesson design since we were empowered and restricted by its capabilities.

As with the language programs noted above, our lesson designs fit into three categories. The first two were initiated by designs that I made, which Audra then adapted. I could see that I was influencing her but I was not for sure how to teach by example without having some impact on her designs. Fortunately, by her own initiative she created a new type of design. Aspects from all three of our basic designs, as well as some from the professional language programs, were incorporated into her final product. We sketched out our designs before making them on the computer so not all of those that are referred to below were actually created.

Computerized Books The first design that I made was a glorified textbook. I simply took conversations and vocabulary lists from the high school Coeur d'Alene language classes and gave the user the ability to click on a word or sentence and hear it spoken. Audra's first designs were similar in that each slide had a list of sentences. The user had to type the translations of each sentence in a box, much like worksheets in the high school class. In her completed lesson she presented a page consisting of a conversation in which the user could click and hear each line as practice for games that followed.

Making Lessons More Like Games Part of a lesson I made on numbers was a prototype for the next basic design. I created this lesson after noting the importance of games in our assessment of other language programs. My emphasis changed from making the computer a useful tool to making it a useful and interesting tool. In this design lessons were presented like games and graphics became much more prominent.

In my number lesson half of the screen was taken up by a picture that had a certain number of objects in it, for example three deer. On the other half of the screen were boxes containing the Coeur d'Alene words for three numbers. The user would try to click on the correct answer. If he or she did a recording would say "Yes!" in Coeur d'Alene, as well as the Coeur d'Alene word for the number followed by the English for that number. If the user picked the wrong answer a voice would respond in the negative and then say the Coeur d'Alene followed by the English for that answer.

Audra designed similar exercises, but the pictures she used were much more than a way to improve the visual appeal of the page. She created pages that had a sentence written in Coeur d'Alene, which could be heard by clicking on it. In the middle of the screen was a large picture representative of the meaning of the sentence. Below the picture were three choices for the meaning of the sentence.

Pages Without Writing I was pleasantly surprised when Audra showed me a design unlike those discussed above. The page consisted of a picture of an office with a coffee cup on the desk, a clock on the wall, an airplane seen through a window and a chief sitting behind the desk (The Coeur d'Alene word for "boss" literally means "little chief."). All of these objects were vocabulary words for the lesson and when clicked on a recording would say the Coeur d'Alene word.

She explained to me that she had become bored with the other designs we were using, so she came up with this. She thought that if she had tired of the other exercises, others would too. In her final project, she used each of the types of lessons that we had created to keep it exciting.

Conclusions

The results of this technology class will influence plans to teach the Coeur d'Alene language with the computer despite there being only one student. The fact that many of my expectations based on the work of Miller Cleary and Peacock (1998) were fulfilled further supports the results. Audra's assessment of language programs and her own lesson designs emphasized the importance of orality and visuals over written communication in the learning process. Teaching by example and the cooperative manner of the class worked very well.

An interesting pattern appeared concerning the amount of orality, text and graphics an exercise contained. Among the language programs we examined, *Learn Russian Now!* had the highest volume of text per page and was deemed the least exciting. The *Instant Immersion* programs were the most fun but had the least amount of text. *Learn Russian Now!* undoubtedly had the most information on one page. It was also the program with which Audra thought she would spend the least amount of time.

The exercises that Audra and I designed also reflected this pattern. The first pages we created consisted mostly of text. The next type were more like games. They relied heavily on graphics and audio and less so on text. After getting bored with these designs, Audra created pages that used graphics and audio exclusively.

This pattern does not indicate a threat to literacy in Coeur d'Alene from computer programs to teach the language, because these instructional tools can not stand-alone. Audra seemed doubtful of the impact the lessons we were making could have on the children at the Tribal School even if she did think they were better than the computerized lessons that they had. She emphasized the need for the school to have people teaching Coeur d'Alene classes to the students and not just a computer program. Such classes would probably rely on literacy like the ones that presently exist and therefore strike a balance between a literate emphasis in one medium and an oral in the other.

Therefore, the effectiveness of language lessons on the computer relies not only on design, but on the manner it is used in. Students will spend more time doing something that they find exciting and fun but the computer can not replace the encouragement and

motivation that a real class provides. Since we are speaking here of an endangered language, motivation to learn it and use it is a huge factor.

Brandt (1988) notes the importance of tailoring the results of research on endangered languages to the needs of the communities working to renew those languages. This has been demonstrated with the results of this technology class on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation. Much more has come to light than whether Coeur d'Alene language computer programs are a threat to literacy. The need to get at the perspective of the students of endangered languages in order to create tools that not only *can* but *will* help has been illuminated.

For this reason I am concluding this paper with a piece written by Audra Vincent, Coeur d'Alene tribal member and my student in this class. She touches on many of the points that I have noted and some that I have not. Even if some overlap exists, that she is writing of her language creates a much more poignant presentation and further emphasizes the importance of the perspective of students of endangered languages.

A Student's Perspective and Insights

These days there is a lot of technology. There are many possibilities with this technology that we have. There are more and more people using technology in their lives. Many of the technical devices provide a faster way of doing things. Each day it seems as if this technology is getting more advanced and is used by a lot more people.

When learning a language there is a lot of time and work involved. Technology can help, but there are pros and cons when using it. There is a big difference between helping to teach a language with technology and trying to save a language with it.

In my situation the main point is to save a language and get more people interested in it. So my points, techniques and opinions may be different than others. My opinions are based on my experiences and the situations that I have had learning my language with technology.

From kindergarten through eighth grade I went to school at the Coeur d'Alene Tribal School. When I first started school there up until when I graded eighth grade there was a program on the computer to help teach us the Coeur d'Alene language. When I left that school I only knew a couple of words and that was it. That was not very good progress. From 1991 until this day that is their only hope in passing on the language to the young Coeur d'Alenes.

Now that I know a lot more about the language and the ways I think would best help get others interested I can see the flaws that the program had. When trying to get people interested and helping to teach a language there are certain perspectives to think about.

When I was trying to use the program provided at the Tribal School I was lost. There was no explanation, or if there was it obviously did not do any good. Imagine coming from a country across the world and being told

"read this book, have a report done or you will lose your job or fail your class" and the book is in English. What is English? That person might not know. What if they did not know how the letter "a" or "i" sounded or what a sentence was? Pretty scary and hard, huh? That is how it was and still is. You can not throw this program at some kids and expect them to become fluent speakers without some living, breathing human guidance.

Most of the students didn't like the language because they did not understand it. After being forced to try to learn something that they had no idea about or anyone to ask if they had questions, they would just give up. The program's sentences were hard to understand. In the Coeur d'Alene language sentences are put together differently. We didn't understand anything.

This summer I started designing lessons on the computer. I thought of the Coeur d'Alene Tribal School's lessons and tried to design the lessons the best that I could. One of the programs I am planning on creating is at the beginner's level. It explains certain punctuation. The program is basically just words. This program is the first step up to learning a difficult language.

When I was trying out different language programs I figured out things that worked and those that didn't. All of these programs were on languages I knew nothing about. On one of the programs I was already lost at the main menu. I had no idea what button to press to get to lessons or practice. Another program had a lot of long pages of explanation that were boring. I did not want to read all of it. On the same page there was a game. My eyes went to the game so I did not read the explanations.

When you want to get people interested in a language it is best to start off making the language fun. What I found to be fun were the colorful games that I looked at. When playing games you have fun and learn. Once the people are interested they can move on to the more complicated stuff. I don't like seeing only black and white. Colorful pages stand out and catch your eye. I made my lessons colorful and mostly games.

When I first started designing my lessons I made a lot of writing practice and testing. The best way to learn is to write it out and work with it. The more a person tests themselves and thinks in the language the more they will progress. That is the next step after getting them interested.

Technology is a good thing to have when it is your last hope. It is best to be taught by a person and told what to do. A computer does not have many teaching skills. A computer can not tell you "good job," "you're good at learning" or "you're a great student."

There is a lot of pride in knowing how you are doing. When you feel proud you will want to try harder. A computer can't completely take a teacher's place. You will learn much more from a person but there is a shortage of Coeur d'Alene speakers. There are also busy people that do not have time to attend classes. So technology may be the only way to go.

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible, or as enjoyable without the support and help of the following people: Lawrence Nicodemus; the members of The Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council; the staff of the Department of Education and the Language Center; Wanda Matt; Kim Matheson, Bob & Reva Hess; Jill Maria Wagner; Wade McGee; LaVina Louie.

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***Building a Future for Our Past:* Contemporary Guatemalan Mayan Literature**

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Abstract

A dozen recent works by Guatemalan Mayan writers are discussed with the intention of placing them within the socio-political context of the current Maya movement. Links with the oral tradition informing this new literature are described. Moreover, the growing autonomy with which these writers create a new space where Mayan voices enter into dialogue with the non-Mayan world is explored, while pointing out several of the resources, including language choice, used in this new dialogue. In this way I argue that an understanding of this new literature requires a grasp of its dialogic posture between two worlds.

Introduction

As Bakhtin has observed, the act of speaking is more than simply preparing a message; it is actively anticipating its reception, that is to say, imagining the world and the disposition of the listener (Morson & Emerson 1990). Such a perspective permits us to appreciate modern Maya literature not as a simple reaction to circumstances, but as a reflection of an acute awareness of the non-Maya world and of how it might react to its message.

Although Mayan literature enjoys an impressive millennial tradition, since the arrival of Europeans it has had to survive mainly in its oral forms. This oral tradition has served as a repository of culture and worldview and has been largely for Mayan consumption. In contrast, today a growing cultural and linguistic revitalization movement among the Highland Mayas seeks to restore Mayan literature in its written forms, as well, and to expand its focus to include a non-Maya public. A critical point in this process was the publication of the Rigoberta Menchú's testimony, through which the Mayan voice, silenced for so many centuries, made itself heard in previously inaccessible spaces to represent and question the sociopolitical reality it endures. Since its publication a minor boom of publications by Maya authors seeks to readjust the discourse on "the Maya question" in fairer terms.

This close relation between literary production and its sociopolitical context is one of the most notable characteristics in the new Mayan literature. A change in the

social reality requires a new discourse, a new way of framing the issues, and it is precisely these demands that influence the form and the content of the new Mayan literature. In the explicitly political titles directed at the peace process, as well as the less obvious works, one notes a constant effort to arm the voice Maya with a new terminology of gestures and experiences with which to defend itself against outside oppression and to project itself into the future. It would be difficult to find a work that could be classified as purely esthetic, when due to the political context the mere act of writing in a Mayan voice is to disrupt the established order.

Early Works

Many of the Mayan demands expressed in the Guatemalan Peace Accords of 1996 seek greater autonomy. One observes the struggle to regain control over linguistic and cultural destiny in the evolution of Mayan literature since the publication of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. Apart from recent controversy concerning this work, and with all due respect to its historic merits, it is important to note that the choice of content, organization and distribution of the work were in non-Mayan hands. Today the Mayas are no longer content to let others represent them, but claim the right to represent themselves to the world.

An important step in the struggle of such autonomy was the publication in 1992 of *La otra cara* by novelist Gaspar Pedro González. This it was one of the first modern literary works written originally in a Mayan language by a Maya author. González mentions two goals in writing his novel: first, to record the history and traditions of his community, which are disappearing from memory; and, second, to inform the world of the reality that his people live. Perhaps inspired in part by the testimonial work of Menchú and its effectiveness in achieving these goals, González produces a work that complements Menchú's by creating a fictional novel recounting the life of a Maya man from birth to death. With this story the author provides a profound vision of his community, its traditions and struggles. The author not only presents the Mayan experience to the outside world, but also shows the Maya reader how to get the Other to listen.

Contemporary Maya authors find diverse media in which to publish their work, from the public sector, such as the Departments of Culture and of Education, to private institutions with foreign support, such as the Rafael Landívar University, to small businesses, both non-Mayan, such as the Yax Te' Foundation, and Mayan, such as Cholsamaj. It should also be mentioned that in the past fifteen years more than fifty titles by Maya authors have been published in fields related to bilingual education, which remain beyond of the scope of the present work.

Representation and Historical Context

Maya authors not only seek to represent their own world to outsiders, but also wish to participate in the representation of their world by outsiders. In the decade several academic works have appeared in Guatemala by Maya writers appropriating Western social science and its discourse to claim their own territory, adopting an academic voice, at their own discretion. Thus they establish credibility before the western reader while they employ other elements directed at the Maya reader.

In their book, *Building a Future for Our Past*, the Guatemalan Council of Mayan Organizations bring together the important documents that, presented in chronological order reveal the evolutionary steps of the specific Peace Accords on Identity and Rights of the Maya Pueblos. The book finishes with the final copy signed by representatives of the Guatemalan government, the guerrilla, and the United Nations. This book gives evidence to non-Mayas of the active participation of the Maya intellectuals in the Peace Process while establishing for the Maya readers the Mayan legitimacy of the document.

In the first chapter of his book *Precolonial Mayan Socio-economy* Víctor Racancoj (1994) utilizes academic sources citing geographic latitude and longitude to establish the borders of Mesoamérica and Mayan territory. He employs diagrams of the astronomical orientation of Mayan temples by Western archaeologists as a base for an explanation of Mayan worldview ("cosmovisión"). He explains the goal of his work in the introduction:

The "official" history has omitted the reality of the precolonial Maya people and portray the arrival of the invaders as to a decadent culture. Some Spaniards, without intending to write history, relate in their letters the marvels they find upon arrival to Abya Yala, present-day America.

Textbooks and history books only repeat inexact data prejudicial to the current image of the Mayan people. To minimize this negative effect, Cholsamaj publishes this

book. The objective is to bring to light part of the real history of the Maya people yearning to build a state in which different peoples and cultures live together peacefully based upon mutual respect.

In the first chapter of his book, *Discrimination Against the Maya People in the Guatemalan Legal Structure* Miguel Curruchiche Gómez quotes Columbus and other Colonial sources to fight the many myths that the Mayas at the time of European contact were a people in decadence which have served to justify European domination. Then he analyzes the legal structure of the country from a Mayan perspective. Finally he presents the results of fieldwork to ascertain the degree of knowledge of basic rights in five Mayan towns. He discovers that the 90% of those interviewed were not aware that being born in Guatemala entitled them to the same rights as Ladinos.

Beginning his review Mayan literature, *Kotz' ib' li: Our Mayan Literature*, Gaspar Pedro González constructs a definition of culture making reference as much to the Babylonians, Chaldeans and Assyrians as to the Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs. He combines the anthropological term "Mesoamerica" with the Amerindian "Abya Yala." He cites archaeological works to assert that the Mayas have occupied their part of the world since the remote past, at the same time noting that,

...most important studies about the Mayan culture have been carried out by more foreign individuals and institutions than by our own governments, in which Mayan participation has been minimal. (P 8).

He contrasts the Western label folkloric with the Mayan term "b' eyb'" which he defines as:

a road that through time has been designed and perfected, the same as occurs in the field of the science of Western cultures.

For Manuel Salazar (1995) the relationship between literature and its historic context is so narrow that, to a certain degree, they become one and the same. Therefore, to analyze literature requires a historic analysis. As he writes in the first chapter beginning his review, *Rupach' uxik kina' oj qati' t qamama': Characteristics of Kaqchikel Mayan Literature*:

When attempting to define the literature of a people that have been militarily and economically invaded by Spain which imposed its language, religion and laws, the following aspects must be emphasized:

- A. Their status as an invaded people...
- B. The oral tradition as the most common medium
- C. The recompilation and transcription of indigenous literature in Latin characters during the invasion and colonization eras
- D. The shortage of literary texts for use by Maya speakers
- E. Literature of a vitality that has persisted for more than five hundred years, in spite a secondary status enforced the official language.

Which Language: Spanish or Maya?

Language choice in Mayan literature plays various roles--some contradictory--in the reach of the message and its reception. On the one hand exists the desire to preserve, promote and operate inside the Maya language. On the other hand is the need to communicate with the outside world. Each Maya individual is located in the center of a set of concentric circles of language: from the closest whose border marks the particular variant of the Mayan language spoken in the natal community to the furthest of Spanish or English as world language. How to honor one's origins and at the same time to assure the most maximum impact of the text? Many authors achieve both through the bilingual publications. Salazar (1995: 30-31) cites the poem by Tetzagüic, "Ruwaq' ij k' aslemal" which includes a dialogue not only between two voices--one Maya, the other Ladino-- but between two languages, reflecting the dynamics between two groups that speak different codes

*A veces quisiera pedir
que los pájaros caminasen
como los hombres en vez de volar.
A veces quisiera pedir
que los hombres volasen como los pájaros
en vez de caminar.*

*¿Para qué? dirán los hombres
¿a cambio de qué? cantarán los pájaros...
No..sólo es un hombre loco
el que clama en la esquina.*

*Clama por una noción de guerra
para que haya paz,
por una toma de conciencia de los que sólo
la hacen para que haya una toma de pan
de lo que sólo sufren...*

*Achike k'a yerub'ij re un achin?
ja re' junan kuk'in ri kachalal ri utiwa';
ehhhöj ta nkib'an ri utzil chöj ta k'a nkisu' kichi',
man xa se yesik'in pe.*

*No señora
es que estoy dolido
y de un pesar que echa raíces.*

*ja man okel ta ri ye'atzijoj!
chöj at k'äs.
Taq xtuna' awäch, muqül chik ri xab'ij.*

*Para desengañarla,
y a todos ustedes que ya me rodean,
les cuento:*

*Vengo de un pueblo donde pelean
entre hermanos, a unos los ayudan fuerzas
extrañas, a otros los ayudan amigos de
esos extraños; no sé si sean del todo
amigos, pero en fin: todo a causa de carecer
de decisiones propias.
ESE PUEBLO ES CULPABLE DE LO QUE LE PASA
y no de los que ustedes llaman
utiwa'..es más...*

Xb'e ri q'ab'arel, Ajaw tito'om richin

*De veras, parece que los pájaros ya lo
entendieron y veo que los hombres aún no.
¿Se lo informarán?...tal vez...
!ah, qué importa! por aquí debe empezar
la propia decisión*

To write exclusively in a Mayan language may be considered even subversive, because it excludes the non-Maya reader, and thus permits an expression free of a certain degree of censorship. An example is seen in the poem "Kojk' astäj, Kojyakatäj K'a Wakamin" in Kaqchikel Maya published under the pseudonym Jun Xtän:

*Xoqa k'a ri q'ij, xik'o k'a ri aq'a'
Kojk'astäj k'a wakamin,
Kojyakatäj k'a wakamin,
xoqa k'a ri q'ij chi yojch'o'n,
richin man tiqaxib'ij chik qi'*

*(It's here now, the day; it's gone now, the night,
Let's wake up already, let's rise up now
It's here now, the time to speak
To fear no more.)*

(Salazar 1995: 32)

Many Maya writers feel that the need to record the oral tradition of their communities is more urgent than individual artistic expression. For example, Ruperto

Montejo (1996) collects a dozen stories from San Pedro Soloma, some of which, like "The Men That Became Monkeys" show a clear connection with the ancient Mayan text, *The Popol Wuj*. The oral tradition is born in a Maya-speaking environment, but it must be translated into Spanish for broader readership. In his book of poetry, *Ajyuq' : The animalero*, Humberto Ak' abal (1995) presents translations in Spanish of his verses originally written in K'ichee' Maya, such as "The bees" (p.14):

*Abejas,
comadres de las flores,
apenas amanece
zumban a visitarlas
hablan dulzuras*

caminan calzadas de polen.

*sólo se toman tiempo
para soltar una cagadita
y vuelven a platicar*

*[Bees,
Godmothers of the flowers,
it's hardly dawned
and they buzz by to visit them
they speak sweetnesses*

Their feet clad in pollen.

*They only take time out
To let loose a little dump
and they're back to chitchat.]*

Another solution to this linguistic conflict is found in some bilingual publications where a Spanish translation accompanies the original version. The translation brings the text closer to the non-Mayan reader and takes it further from its world of origin. For example, in spite of the generalized use of *vos*, a pronoun with profound socio-historic roots in the Spanish of rural Guatemala, terms of address in most stories have been translated with the more standard pronoun, *tú*.

Discourse Appropriation

Within the context of parody, Bakhtin mentions the technique of including the discourses of the Other to provoke a dialogic tension between the two discourses. In his collection of stories from San Miguel Acatán, Pedro Miguel Say narrates five episodes of Pedro Rimares, a Maya picaresque character who manages to deceive a series of Ladinos, among them, a priest, a rich man, his boss, two merchants, and some mule train drivers. These stories

provide a world where the dialogue between Maya and Ladino is resolved in favor of the Maya. The location of the dialogue in the narrative reflects its roots in oral tradition, where the limits of the auditory memory require a constant repetition of the key elements. For example, in the following piece, the relation among the three participants is highlighted, that the mother sends her son off to his godfather, a priest; that the son is of little use to his mother, and that he will work for his godfather.

The woman said to her son:

- Son, go see your godfather. He'll teach you, since you won't listen to me. There you're going to really work.

- Alright, Mother, I'll go see my godfather. If you have no more use for me, I'll go work with my godfather..

I've come, godfather. Is there anything I can do for you?

"Go see your godfather," my mother told me. That's why I've come here to you. My mother's the one that sent me. "Go see your godfather, I've no use at all for you anymore," that's what she told me. That's why I've come here to you.

"Alright, godson," the priest told him, "you'll work for me, godson". (Say 1996: "The Disobedient Son, p 61)

This story goes on to illustrate another characteristic of the genre: the Ladino conception of the Maya as fool. This view is not openly contested because it produces carelessness under the shadow of which the Maya achieves his end. To rid himself of the bother of having the disobedient boy about, the priest sends him to Hell, sure that never he will return. Four years later the boy shows up at the priest's door, with a devil in hand. The hardships to which he was condemned did not kill him. On the contrary, he returns from his sentence stronger than ever.

In his collection of old-time stories, José Juan includes "The Tiger and the Deer" in which the two animals come to occupy the same land for a good while without noticing the other. When they discover that they have been helping themselves mutually in building their house, they decide to live together. But the tiger's custom of feeding on deer instills fear in his companion, a situation that gets worse when the deer, trying to understand the other's experience, brings tiger meat home for supper. Due to their insuperable differences they must separate.

Conclusions

Recent publications by Maya authors reflect and contribute to the growing autonomy with which Mayas are constructing a new space where their voices are clearly heard in dialogue with the non-Maya world. Utilizing elements of Western discourses, these writers create a point of encounter between readers of various worlds for the

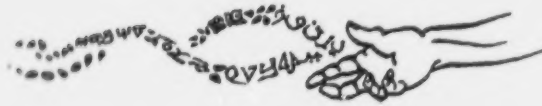
purpose of plotting a common path to the future. Morson and Emerson (1990) describe Prosaics as the philosophy of the everyday, referring to such authors as Tolstoy and Chekhov, who found the more important part of life in the quotidian. The evolution of contemporary Mayan literature includes few works of great scale. Of the books cited in the present work, only the testimony of Menchú and *A Mayan Life* by González surpass two hundred pages and enjoy much in the way of sales and recognition. However, it is precisely in these small works where the seeds of Mayan literary future may lie.

Notes

All translations of original texts into English presented in this paper are my own.

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3

Choosing an Orthography

The Future of Koho—A Mon-Khmer Language of Việt Nam

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Abstract

Koho, a Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic) language, is spoken by approximately 100,000 people located in Lam Dong province in the highland region of Việt Nam. There are also several thousand other speakers who now live in France and the USA. In 1986, and again in 1992, Koho refugees were resettled in North and South Carolina. Like so many emigrant groups preceding them, the children are not learning the language and cultural traditions are not being preserved. Maintenance of the Koho language has become an important issue to the relocated community.

Since the 1930s, missionaries, government agencies, and educators using several different alphabets have produced scripture, primers, grammars, and dictionaries. After 1975, use of minority languages was discouraged and a Vietnamization campaign emphasized integration of minority peoples into the majority national society. Despite the fact that Koho has 100,000 speakers, it has the potential to become an endangered language. A challenge to overseas Koho will be maintaining their "critical mass" of speakers.

This presentation will review the history of the development of orthographies, explore the religious, political, and pedagogical ramifications of orthography choice in the preparation of literacy materials, and review resources for language and cultural maintenance.

Introduction

The Koho,¹ who call themselves *kon cau*, number approximately 100,000 people and inhabit most of Lâm Đồng province in highland Việt Nam; several thousand now live overseas in France and the USA. They are one of approximately fifty minority groups living in Việt Nam; these people are also known as *montagnards* or highlanders. Koho, along with the Chrau, Mnong, and Stieng languages, comprise the South Bahnaric branch of the Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic) language family. Indigenous to the central highlands of Việt Nam, these peoples have been subject to Khmer, Cham, French, and Vietnamese rule at various times during their history.

¹ The ethnonym Koho [kə'ho] is derived from a Cham word that refers collectively to a group of several peoples (Cil, Lát, Mát, Nóp, Riong, Sre, Tring) speaking mutually intelligible dialects in the southern part of the highlands of Việt Nam (Olsen, 1968 and 1976).

During the Vietnam War, it is estimated that 30% of the population was decimated in the fighting and subsequent occupation by the Communists.

Many highlanders who had any connection with the former Saigon government were imprisoned in "reeducation camps" and released only in the late 1980s. Several anti-Vietnamese highlander autonomy movements were operating in Việt Nam and Cambodia until 1992, when they laid down their arms and were relocated to North and South Carolina. There is limited contact between Koho in American and their kinfolk in Việt Nam.

Orthographies—Background and History

A romanized orthography based on the Vietnamese national alphabet (*quốc ngữ*) was developed in 1936 for Koho-Sre by French colonial administrators and missionaries. That orthography, while burdened with cumbersome diacritics (like Vietnamese), was the most consistently systematic alphabet (i.e. nearly phonemic) utilized to date for Koho. During the chaos of the Vichy-Japanese occupation at the end of World War II, the legal documents authorizing the alphabet were lost. Apparently, for this reason, it was discontinued (Smalley, 1954). (Several characters in this orthography do not exist in Vietnamese font: ð, ï, ã.)

In 1949, a new orthography commission met in Dalat to devise an acceptable replacement. The commission was convened to address the problem encountered by Jacques Doumes, a Catholic priest, who had compiled a Koho-French dictionary and found that no one would publish it in the 1936 orthography. The proposed orthography was modeled on European languages, such as Dutch and Finnish, where long vowels are doubled (*a*, *aa* versus *ä*, *ä*, etc.). The intent was to create an orthography that could be used on an ordinary (French) typewriter, easily published, or even sent in a telegram (Martini, 1952). Vietnamese-based characters were changed to more European-looking ones (*đ* *ơ* *ư* became *dd* *ô* *û*). Doumes' dictionary (1950) and most of his subsequent works were published in this orthography.

Unfortunately, even among a newly literate people, attachment to a written tradition, however brief, attendant

with a particular orthography, lingers on, so more recent proposals have gained acceptance with difficulty in some circles. For example, there is a major controversy between two factions of the Protestant (Tin Lành) church over the use of *i* versus *ê*. One group retains both *i* and *ê* to represent the single phoneme /i/ in its publications (a hold-over from the 1936 alphabet); the other uses only *ê*, which was consistent with the orthography developed by the Christian and Missionary Alliance, in conjunction with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and sanctioned by the former south Vietnamese government for use in educational materials published by the Highlander Education Project. As late as 1993, the Koho translation of the Psalms was published in the *i*-only orthography (Vietnamese Tribal Ministries, Inc.). Most Catholic publications are still issued in the 1936 alphabet (Olsen, 2000).

During the 1960s and 70s, a series of pedagogical materials in Koho and a dozen other minority languages were produced by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) under contract to the former Saigon government—the Highlander Education Project. Writing primers, science, and health books were used in many classrooms where Koho was the language of instruction in the primary grades; in the higher grades, Vietnamese was phased in.

Following the Communist victory in 1975, minority language use in the classroom was essentially discontinued and Vietnamese became the language of instruction at all levels of education. All pre-1975 materials were banned. An ongoing Vietnamization campaign emphasizes integration of minority peoples into the majority national society. During fieldwork in Việt Nam in 1999, I observed that minority languages were not being nourished in the “old country”. Realistically, unless Vietnamese government policies change, the overseas Koho are “on their own” as far as language and cultural maintenance are concerned.

For example, a Koho orthography developed in 1983 by the Vietnamese government is vehemently rejected by the North Carolina Koho as the “communist alphabet”. Even though a Vietnamese-Koho dictionary was published using it (*Từ Điển Việt-Koho*, 1983), I seriously doubt that the orthography will be used outside of Việt Nam.

What is the future of Koho?

Despite the fact that the language has 100,000 speakers, Koho has the potential to become an endangered language. If the current assimilationist policies of the Vietnamese government continue, the future of Koho in its homeland is not bright. Prior to 1975, some minority languages in Viet Nam enjoyed Stage 4 status as measured on Fishman's

eight stages of language endangerment (Fishman, 1991).² In 1999, I saw little or no evidence of minority language use outside of church or family gatherings in their homes—no radio or television programs, no periodicals. Ethnographic and folkloric literature is translated totally into Vietnamese with few if any citations in the native language.

Challenges

In North Carolina, Koho is used in the home, at church, and in the community. In 1998, I met a few children who did not know the language, so Koho probably falls between Fishman's Stage 5 and 6, at least in that community. For the overseas Koho, maintaining the critical mass of speakers will be the main challenge in the future. Another, lesser, challenge will be deciding what orthography this community wants to use in writing their language. An anonymous reviewer of my paper proposal noted that I describe the history of the orthographies, but do not propose any solution to them. That is correct; the community needs to make that decision. I have suggested to a Koho scholar preparing a monolingual dictionary for his people that he use the SIL alphabet developed in the 1960s and 70s, because there are many other educational, pedagogical, and literary materials available in that orthography. Almost all of their publications from that period are available on microfiche.

I ran into this same problem while compiling a Koho-English dictionary and preparing a reference grammar. If my audience were primarily linguists and scholars, I could use the International Phonetic Alphabet and be done with it. However, the Pacific and Asian Linguistic Institute of the University of Hawaii found that their series of Micronesian and Polynesian language reference grammars were used primarily by native speakers to learn English. Additionally, outside of religious organizations, most publishing companies do not print textbooks (or any other educational or literary effort) for a few thousand people in an obscure language. So, some thought needs to be given to just what purpose a potential publication will serve a linguistic community with already scarce resources. Given these facts, orthography and media do become major decisions for an author-linguist.

In other languages, the status of the “national” language spoken and written in the homeland is important (e.g. French); this situation does not obtain for the overseas Koho. The present status of Koho is similar to that of indigenous Native American languages, with all the attendant challenges to language and cultural maintenance.

² During the Vietnam War, in some rare instances, minority languages reached Stage 2 or 3 when used in government propaganda efforts.

I believe that a comprehensive ethnolinguistic survey of Koho-speakers in the USA is needed to determine the true status of the language and the needs of the community. Input from the community itself will be crucial to that effort.

Opportunities

With the advent of word processors, custom fonts, and electronic publishing, the problems previously experienced with typewriters, typesetting, and limited fonts has become moot. Theoretically, a language community can now choose any orthography it pleases—however “cumbersome” it may have been previously judged. So much of the technical obstacles to orthography choice have essentially been removed.

Until a survey of the community is conducted, certain decisions regarding language maintenance cannot be made. However, a review of some successful indigenous language programs provide resources, guidance, and encouragement.

An excellent resource is John Reyhner's *Teaching Indigenous Languages* web site publication (http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL_Contents.html) with twenty-five chapters devoted to teaching students, teacher education, curriculum and material development, language attitudes and promotion, and examples of successful programs (Reyhner, 1997). Chapter 18, by Alice Anderton, details “The Wordpath Show,” a series of 30-minute weekly public access television programs produced by the Intertribal Wordpath Society (IWS) about Oklahoma Indian languages and the people who are teaching and preserving them. The goals of the *Wordpath* program are to raise the consciousness and appreciation of the general public for Indian languages; 2) to share information by announcing classes, conference, and grants and by demonstrating methodologies and technologies; 3) to create language material for classrooms and archives; and 4) to honor language preservationists, including teachers and students. IWS receives funding from the Oklahoma for the Humanities and the Endangered Language Fund to produce many of its programs. Anderton notes that “it is a good, inexpensive way to produce teaching materials, honor fluent speakers and teachers, and make the public aware of the importance and the beauty of Indian languages.”

Chapter 21 of Reyhner's publication, “Four Successful Indigenous Language Programs”, by Dawn Stiles, compares Cree, Hualapai, Maori, and Hawaiian indigenous language programs and describes common components and problems of implementation. The programs were chosen based on four criteria. First, these languages are categorized as in Stage 6 using Fishman's graded intergenerational disruption scale for threatened languages (Fishman, 1991). Second, the programs have common

elements: curriculum development, community support, parent involvement, and government support. Third, the programs exist in different countries (Canada, USA, and New Zealand) where governmental influence and support could be compared. Fourth, these programs have been noted by the bilingual professional community as model programs for endangered indigenous languages. Stiles notes that each program has an integral partnership of language and culture. These programs developed curriculum that combines indigenous language and cultural instruction. The need for written teaching materials was a common element in each program. Community support and involvement was crucial, as was parental involvement. “These four programs have attained their measure of success because parents have not given up on the dream.” Other problems encountered were teacher availability, teacher training, and funding. Except for the Hualapai program, the other program experienced unstable funding as a major detriment to their success. Stiles also stresses that the benefits of these programs extends to the pride developed and identity regained by the children involved. Teenage loss of identity can lead to gang activity, alcohol and drug abuse, and a high dropout rate.

In Utah, where I live, the Northern Ute Indian Tribe is initiating a Ute Language Revitalization Project that includes a concentrated language education effort, development of an orthography, and improvements to the tribe's web site (<http://www.ubtanet.com/~northemute>). Northern Ute, a Uto-Aztecan language, is currently spoken by 478 people out of an estimated 3,200 tribal members (Mims, 2000). Although, the Koho language is not as endangered as Ute, their program can serve as an example of what can be done. Development of a web site is an excellent idea, especially appealing to younger speakers (or non-speakers, as the case may be).

Having given more thought to my Koho-English dictionary, when it is completed, I intend to have it and the reference grammar accessible on the Internet and on CD-ROM, using the powerful tools now available. A user will be able to click on a word and hear it pronounced by a native speaker. Another click will bring up an image or a picture of an unfamiliar item. This medium also appeals to a younger audience of users. Future orthography changes or revisions to spelling can be handled by a global change command. New words or sentences can be added to the dictionary. There are many examples of electronic monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on the Internet and the software to create such documents is now affordable and available.

Conclusion

Although the American Koho-speaking community probably falls somewhere between Stage 5 and 6 of Fishman's scale, the future of Koho is quite promising, but

it involves some decisions and challenges to the community. It is not too early to start planning for the preserving and archiving of cultural and linguistic materials. As detailed above, there are model programs, and excellent resources available. Public access television and electronic publishing on the Internet present only a few of the many ways to help maintain the language. My own personal experience with the Koho over the past three decades has been that they are eager and receptive to preserving their language and culture.

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The Applied Linguist in Indian Country: Preservation and Revival of the Catawba Language

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Abstract

In the past, whenever the scholarly world "discovered" yet another American Indian culture in need of "rescuing", researchers flocked to that American Indian community with their recording devices. Around thirty years ago, this attitude began changing as more and more specialists in anthropology and its various branches were employed in non-academic positions often by American Indian Nations or associated organizations. This was a development viewed very positively by American Indian communities like the Catawba Indian Nation. It was not until more recent times that both the Catawba and non-Catawba worlds acknowledged the destructive consequences of encroachments, first by Spanish exploration, then by English colonialism and later by academic colonialism. There were genuine efforts on both sides to correct the negative effects of these "invasions" on the Catawba Indian Nation. One of these efforts was the creation in 1989 of the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project. As a Non-Catawba and the Applied Linguist at the Project, I have learned to work not only in terms of European linear thought but also in American Indian "circular" thought. Any language material, cultural information and artifacts once studied and taken away from the Nation will be returned, bringing the Catawba full circle.

Introduction

Historically, the academic world has been notorious for "rescuing" American Indian cultures. Each researcher would rush to that "discovered" American Indian community with their notebooks and agenda, and some with institutional affiliations. Their loyalties rarely lay with the American Indian community. There was no feeling of obligation to share the information and artifacts with the community being studied. Description of these communities as "primitive" and "unsophisticated" were quite common still as late as fifty years ago and the people of that community were often described as "illiterate" and "of unusually low intelligence".¹

In the late 1960s and 1970s, this perspective began changing as an increasing number of anthropologists were working in non-scholastic positions often with Native American groups or related associations. This attitude change was a general trend not only in anthropological fields but also in psychology, sociology and political sciences. Codes of ethics were developed, refined and adopted. In the most recent years, the responsibility of the researcher had evolved firstly towards the group or community being studied and then to the public, the

discipline, students and trainees, employers, clients, sponsors and the government.²

The Catawba Indian Nation, like many other First Nations, saw this progress as a step towards a better understanding between American Indian communities and non-Indian communities. Since the earliest contact with the Spanish Explorers, except for one minor incident during the Yamasee War, the Catawba were friendly towards the Europeans. Still, their heritage and land was looted and plundered first by Spanish exploration, then by English colonialism and later by academic colonialism. It has not been very long that national and local governments and corporate entities have begun undertaking reparations of the annihilative aftereffects of these intrusions. Although bitter feelings still remained, there were sincere attempts in both camps to rectify the consequences of these "incursions" on the culture and land of the Catawba Indian Nation.

One of these attempts was the forming in 1989 of a cultural preservation project aptly called the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project (CCPP). Their mission was to protect, preserve, promote and maintain the rich cultural heritage of the Catawba Indian Nation. Organized and run by the Catawba, they employed Non-Catawba specialists in the fields of Archaeology, Archives, Exhibits and Applied Linguistics to build up different departments within the Cultural Center.

The Language Department

The Language Department was organized to fulfill two main functions: education and research. Apart from the department's extensive research, throughout the United States, to find every known document that has any information on the Catawba language, the Language Department has scheduled time for reviewing written materials to ensure accuracy for future generations. This research will result in the first ever published Catawba Reference Dictionary.

In addition to the written research being found, looked at and analyzed, the Language Department has initiated a "Language Preservation through Oral History" program. Most of the tribal elders will be interviewed and their interviews will be transcribed. The information will be used to further the dictionary, research and the language materials.

¹ Frank G. Speck, *Catawba Texts* (New York: Columbia University, 1934; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1969), XII.

² American Anthropological Association, "Revised Principles of Professional Responsibility", 1990 from Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, ed., *Ethics and the Field of Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), Appendix I.

Besides the Language Department's ongoing language practices, the department has begun a curriculum for the teachers of the new Head Start program and has started developing a curriculum to work with Adult Education classes. The Language Department's main goal is to have Catawba spoken on a daily basis by every Catawba, as it was one hundred years ago. This will take awhile but with language practices for various age groups and at various times of the day, this is an attainable goal.

Preservation of the Catawba Language

The Catawba language, although highly endangered, has profited from explorers' interest as early as 1701.³ Perhaps even earlier if we include the Spanish explorers that came through the Carolinas around the 1540s. Language materials from these sources are naturally scant and were incidental within accounts of Indian cultures of the Southeast. However, they give us a glimpse into older forms of Catawba and forms of related Eastern Siouan languages still spoken during that time. By the end of the 18th century, separate vocabulary lists of Catawba began to appear in manuscripts and publications. Serious study of the Catawba language emerged towards the end of the 19th century. Studies included comparisons between Catawba, related and non-related languages, phonology and some attempt to sort out the grammar. These studies continued until around the 1950s when interest in the Catawba language diminished with the death of the last fluent native speaker, Chief Samuel Taylor Blue, in 1959. The next twenty-five years did not produce any significant advance in the study of the Catawba language. All the original research was tucked away in archives and private collections scattered mostly across the United States. There was a brief resurgence of interest in the Catawba language in 1984 that resulted in an M.A. thesis⁴ and an article.⁵

At this point, for several years already, there was the rising awareness within the Catawba community that the younger generations of Catawbans were losing connection with their native culture. Tribal elders recognized the need for an entity apart from the tribal government to disseminate the Catawba culture. Thus in 1989, the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project was incorporated. This provided the Catawba an avenue to explore all possible aspects of the Catawba culture including the language. By now, the Project had started holding language classes with the limited resources they had. As time went on, they were able to gather more and more material on the language. It was at this point that I became involved in researching the Catawba language.

Before my involvement in studying the Catawba language, my only other exposure to a North American Indian language was years ago. As a teenager, I had visited the towns of Moose Factory and Moosonee in Northern Ontario, Canada. I was fascinated that many

street signs and billboards were not just in English and French but also in symbols that I had never seen before. I soon learned that this was the Swampy Cree language. I also learned that it was not unusual to hear it spoken throughout that area. The symbols I saw were the alphabet created by an Anglican missionary in the late 19th century.⁶ I obtained a copy of the Lord's Prayer in this alphabet, as it was the most common sample printed in Cree. I wondered how this missionary devised the orthography and how the Swampy Cree accepted it. Years later, when I collected and compiled the manuscripts on the Catawba language, the same questions confronted me. The research was done during different time periods. Each researcher or recorder of the Catawba language had varying degrees of experience in recording a language. Some spoke only one language, English; others were multilingual. All these factors contributed to variations in the phonetic transcription of the Catawba language. Then there were the differences in the informants' idiolect, dialect, fluency and memory. Since Catawba was not a written language, it was left to the researcher's discretion how to record the language. There was never any collaborative effort between researchers and the Catawba to devise an orthography for the Catawba language. Unfortunately, from the 1920s on, oral traditions were not sufficient anymore to promulgate the language. English was the preferred language and only a few elders spoke Catawba.

In essence then, even with all the documents on the language, the Catawba language seemed doomed with the death of Chief Sam Blue. There was now the urgent need to make the Catawba language written, to create a standard alphabet, to preserve it. It was time for repayment. After all the years of academic colonialism, the Catawba language was ready for a renaissance.

During the second year of my Master's degree, I began trips to the reservation to make use of the newly established Archives at the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project. Shortly thereafter, I began trips to Washington, Philadelphia, and Maine to retrieve information on the Catawba language and bring it back to Archives. My next task was to synthesize the different phonetic transcriptions into an understandable orthography. With the help of my academic advisors, Dr. B. P. Esquivel and Dr. Frank T. Siebert, I produced a preliminary orthography and a short reference dictionary.⁷ Nevertheless, I was still not satisfied with the results.

Revival of the Catawba Language

By this time, I was finished with my Master's degree and working as the Applied Linguist at the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project. When we resumed language classes or practices, as I like to call them, I presented the preliminary orthography to the Catawba. Together, we created the New Standard Catawba Alphabet that we use for any written form of the Catawba Language today. This process took approximately six months and produced 27

³ John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, ed. Hugh Talmage Lefler (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1967).

⁴ Kathleen D. Shea, "Catawba Lexicon" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1984).

⁵ Paul Voorhis, "Catawba Morphology in the Texts of Frank Siebert and Matthews and Red Thunder Cloud," *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics* 9 (1984): 1-29.

⁶ The Anglican missionary whose name is unknown was a member of the St. Thomas Anglican Church founded in Moose Factory in 1860. The alphabet was created in 1882.

⁷ Claudia Y. Heinemann, "The Catawba Language: A Work in Progress" (Unpublished M.L.A. thesis, Winthrop University MLA Department, 1996).

alphabet characters. It was easiest to present the alphabet system divided into vowels (Figure 1) and consonants (Figure 2a). We spend more time on the vowels since they differ more from the American vowels than do the consonants.

Long	Short	Nasal
a	ɑ	ã
e	ɛ	ẽ
ii	i	ĩ
uu	u	ũ

Figure 1: Catawba Vowels

This system for vowel representation closely corresponds to the English (or Latin) alphabet. The variants of the long and short 'a' sound are easily explained in spelling. The 'a' is described as the typewritten 'a' and the 'ɑ' is described as "how you first learned how to write an 'a' ". The short 'e' is described as "a backwards 3". All the nasal vowels have "right hooks" or "fish hooks" underneath them but are otherwise unchanged from the English alphabet. The long 'i' and long 'u' are merely doubled up. This system proved to be understandable for all ages and learning levels that were familiar with the Latin alphabet system. The system for consonant representation functions much the same as for the vowels. For the language practices, we use the system shown in Figure 2a. It is based on where the sound is produced from the front to the back of the vocal tract.

p, b, m
t, d, n, s,
č
r – palatal trill
w
y
g, k
h
? – glottal stop

Figure 2a: Catawba Consonants

Admittedly, this alphabet system was decidedly linear. In the end, we all agreed that in a world so dependent on the written word, an alphabet system would greatly advance the preservation of an endangered language.

For use in more formal presentations, I have loosely based the consonant system on the IPA, shown in Figure 2b. This generally covers most of the consonant sounds with a few exceptions, the affricate 'č' and the voiced labial-

velar approximant 'w' also called a voiced labiovelar glide.

	B i l a b i a l	D e n t a l	A l v e o l a r	P l o s t a l v e o l a r	P a l a r	V e l a r	G l o t t a l
Plosive	p b	t d				k g	ʔ
Nasal	m	n					
Trill		r					
Fricative		s	{ʃ}				h
Approximant				j			

[tʃ] = č

[w] is listed under "Other Symbols"

Figure 2b: Catawba Consonants in IPA

The 'j' sound occurs very infrequently in Catawba and we did not include it in the alphabet. We generally refer to it as the "lazy s" in rapid speech. An example, where the 's' deteriorates into the 'j' sound, would be the word 'iswã' meaning "river". Nevertheless, I included it here because it forms part of the IPA representation of the affricate we write as 'č'.

The Catawba alphabet as we know it now is fairly well established among the Catawba language practice participants, however it still requires explanation when the general Catawba community encounters it. The Language Department receives requests daily for the translation of words and phrases for prayers, for names and even for poetry. Of course, the Catawba language is not confined to the Catawba community. Many non-Catawba communities are increasingly including Catawba into publications and speeches. Local favorites are words for the Catawba Festival 'ya(b) yɛ iswã' ("day of the river people"), 'tanakɛ' ("hello"), 'tiine eyɛdu' ("how are you?"), 'hawu^h' ("thank you") and the numbers one through ten. More extensive use of the Catawba language even includes street names and village subdivision names on and around the reservation. For this reason, most printings of the Catawba language, such as the *Catawba Animal Words* booklet series⁸, include the pronunciation guide (Figure 3).

In our collaborative efforts to create an alphabet for Catawba and incorporate the sounds of the language, we had to consider another factor: printing. There were symbols like the 'ɑ', the 'ɛ', the 'ẽ' and the nasal hook symbol '˙' that were not standard on a keyboard nor in

⁸ Claudia Y. Heinemann-Priest, *Catawba Animal Words, Book 1* (Rock Hill: Catawba Cultural Preservation Project, 1999), 14-15.

most computer fonts. Fortunately, computer programs and software were making rapid advances. I was able to find font systems over the internet that incorporated the IPA and other phonetic alphabets. Five years ago, the SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics) provided the best package. It was free and had the symbols we needed. Now we can find all but the glottal stop in the extended alphabet of Microsoft Word.⁹ Printing special fonts is no longer an issue with larger printers and publishers, however it can still be a sticking point with smaller local companies. Due to this fact, the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project Language Department prints many of its own publications.

Pronunciation Guide

This guide shows a same or similar sound in an English word and in parentheses shows the English equivalent (the symbol "~" shows closest equivalent) used in the booklet to help in pronunciation for non-Catawba speakers.

- a - as in father (ah)
- ɑ - as in sun, but (a)
- ə - similar as in long (~ong)
- b - as in bear (b) even in "mb" combination
- č - as in cheese (ch)
- d - as in deer (d)
- ø - similar as in day (~ay) rarely (eh)
- ε - as in bet (eh)
- ə - similar as in hang (~ang)
- g - as in goose (g)
- h - as in horse (h)
- h - breath of air after vowel or consonant (h)
- ? - like a light "k" sound (q) or doubled consonant
- ii - longer than meet (ee-ee) frequently (ee)
- i - as in bit (ee) or (ih)
- i - similar, as in king (~ing)
- k - as in kangaroo (k)
- m - as in moose (m) even in "mb" combination
- n - as in nanny (n)
- p - as in puppy (p)
- r - palatal trill like a Spanish 'r' (r) sometimes (rr)
- s - as in seal (s)
- t - as in terrier (t)
- uu - similar, as in spoon (oo) sometimes (oo-oo)
- u - similar, as in good (oo)
- ʏ - similar pong (oong)
- w - as in water (w)
- v - as in vak (v)

Figure 3: Pronunciation Guide

In order to revive the Catawba language, we needed to disseminate as much material as possible to the Catawba and non-Catawba communities. One of the first publications for this purpose was a flyer (Figure 4) made for the Catawba Festival. Since then the Language Department has produced flyers, brochures, booklets, and a web page. A reference dictionary is also forthcoming.

Revival of the Catawba Language

As part of our effort to revive the Catawba language, we have created the Language Department headed by Claudia Y. Heinemann-Priest, M.L.A. Every week, she meets with various Language Classes, and together, they learn, speak, and tell stories using Catawba words and phrases. Many Catawba members still remember their grandparents and great-grandparents speaking some Catawba. We hope, by relearning our language, to pass it on to our children and our grandchildren and so preserve, protect, and promote and maintain the rich cultural heritage of the Catawba Indian Nation.

<u>Catawba</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>	<u>English equivalent</u>
tanake	ta-nah-keh	Hi, Howdy
tiine eyedu	tee-nay eh-yeh-du	How are you?
hawu ^h	hah-woh	Thanks (Fine)
yi yat?	ying yahit	What is your name?
tanene	tah-neh-neh	
ni yat?...	nih yahit	My name is...

<u>Catawba</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>	<u>English equivalent</u>
duyi	doo-yee	zero
dapine	da-pih-nay	one
napari	nong-pa-rrih	two
namina	nah-mih-na	three
parapari	pa-rra-pa-rrih	four
paktari	pahk-ta-rrih	five
dipkuura	dip-koo-rrah	six
wasisiniya	wah-sih-sih-nihya	seven
dobusa	da-boo-sah	eight
wəʔča	won(q)-cha	nine
pičine	pih-chih-neh	ten
pičine dapine haksa	pih-chih-neh da-pih-nay hak-sa	eleven
pičine napari	pih-chih-neh nong-pa-rrih	twenty

Figure 4: Catawba Revival Flyer

⁹ Microsoft Word 97 SR 2, computer software, Office 97 for Windows. (Redmond, Wash.: Microsoft Corporation, 1997)

In addition to publications, the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project's Language Department presents a Catawba Language Puppet Show during the annual festival. Catawba tribal members tell five original stories in Catawba that are animated with hand puppets and dolls.

THE FOUR-STEMMED PIPE IS GOOD

(wamesuu kɪ tusa parapari kurihere)

Weʔaradre yeʔ kɪ parapari ʔaʔtukere maʔtut
way-uh-rah-drax yang king
pah-rah-pah-ree tong-took-ehray mong-toot
*A long time ago people the four
fight whenever*

yeʔ migraheʔ yeʔ kɪ atkuware suuktaheʔ hug.
yang mee-grah-hang yang king
at-koo-wah-taray sook-tah-hang hoog
*man great (chief) people the gather
house clearing down*

Uniat yeʔ migraheʔ kɪ wasa
oo-nee-at yang mee-grah-hang
king wong-sah
Then man great(chief) the put

tusa parapari wamesuu maʔbaktare.
too-sah pah-rah-pah-ree
wah-meh-soo mong-back-taray
stems four pipe into put in

Yeʔ kɪ parapari pukehire.
yang king pah-rah-pah-ree
pookay-hee-ray
people the four smoked

Kukoh nitemp mbara ukseraʔire.
koong-kah nee-temp mbah-rah
ook-say-rong-eeray
thus all brothers looked like

Nitemp kurihaʔcure.
nee-temp koo-ree-hah-choo-ray
All good very was

Yeʔ kɪ ʔaʔtukhoʔ emiikrure maʔtut
yang king tong-took-hah
ay-mee-kroo-ray mong-toot
people the fought quarreled whenever

wamesuu kɪ kuriçure.
wah-meh-soo king koo-ree-choo-ray
pipe the good very was

Chief Sam Blue handed down the Catawba Peace Pipe story (Figure 5) through generations to his great-great granddaughter, Shelly Simmers. She takes every opportunity to tell the story for the Festival Puppet Show, storytelling sessions, and educational programs. Educational programs and programs for the public are a vital component of the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project. These programs allow Catawba and non-Catawba employees of the Cultural Center to eliminate stereotypes and inaccuracies that have arisen over many years. The departments of Programs, Language and Archaeology come together and give presentations for school groups, tour groups, summer camps, church groups and specialty groups. These presentations range in length from two hours to an entire day.

Together, we combine two worlds and create a better understanding between American Indian communities and non-Indian communities. As a Non-Catawba and the Applied Linguist at the Project, I have learned to work not only in terms of European linear thought but also in American Indian "circular" thought. I remind myself that, in 1492, Christopher Columbus lost his way and was "discovered" by the natives of North America and that, the pilgrims of Plymouth Rock were "rescued" by Native Americans.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank each and every member of the Catawba Indian Nation without whom the study of the Catawba language and this project would never have been possible.

I am grateful in particular to the Catawba Elders who have dedicated so much of their time to answering questions about themselves and the Catawba language, and for the interest and caring they have shown as teachers.

I would like to acknowledge all those who have ever participated in a language class because they brought me back to earth when I started speaking in linguistic jargon.

I wish to thank Dr. Wenonah G. Haire for being instrumental in creating the Language Department at the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project and my thanks to the staff of the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project for being my editors.

A special thanks to my assistant, Shelly J. Simmers, who keeps me organized to say the least and who, besides working in the Language Department, wears many other hats.

Thank you and a big hug to Billie Anne McKellar and Ann Evans in Archives for their time and expertise (and photocopier).

I acknowledge those who have studied and/or spoken the Catawba language in the past and those who have retained or regained interest in the present, including individuals and institutes.

I thank Dr. Blair A. Rudes for his linguistics insights.

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Moore, my MLA advisor, who has remained a guiding light.

Lastly, I thank my husband Robert, my children Alex and Alyssa, my mother and father, Dr. Barbara P. E.- and Mr. Jürgen Heinemann, and all family and friends who have continued to support me through thick and thin.

Figure 5: The Peace-Pipe Story

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How Do You Write Lisu?

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A paper for: The Fourth International Conference of the Foundation for Endangered Languages:
"Endangered Languages and Literacy", Charlotte, North Carolina, USA - 21-24 September 2000

Abstract

This paper will first introduce the Lisu, a Tibeto-Burman group of approximately 800,000 people residing mainly in Thailand, Myanmar and China, with a small Lisu population in northwestern India.

Second the current systems for writing Lisu will be described very briefly, the principal one being a Roman based orthography with modifications in the orientations of certain letters and some punctuation marks used for tones. This orthography was introduced by James O. Fraser about 1907 and finalized over the next decade. The Lisu alphabet is comprised of 40 Roman characters, all capitals: 30 consonants and 10 vowels. Fifteen of the letters are inverted letters. Six basic and eight combination tones are indicated using English punctuation marks, such as ".", ",", ";" (period, comma, semicolon, colon) etc.

Third a development of the Fraser system (called 'advanced' at the moment by the Lisu) will be described. The Lisu want to be able to do more with and in their own language, but they are hindered by the input system. New orthographies have been introduced using Burmese, Thai, Hindi and Chinese Pinyin alphabets, each of which have limitations. Many Lisu desire to be able to write the language with the typical English alphabet. This would enable the use of cursive writing, as well as the use of all standard writing devices that use English including the typewriter and computer keyboard. It would also provide a motivation and facilitation for non-literate Lisu to learn to read and write Lisu, since it uses the English alphabet that the children are learning in schools.

Fourth, we present five stages in the gradual moving of Lisu orthography from the present Fraser orthography to a completely compatible English-like orthography. Care is taken to preserve the literacy of current speakers, so that they will have a high rate of transference in learning the new English-like orthography. There is also a high degree of transfer for those who read English.

The five stages that are currently being tested in a few selected villages are:

0. Traditional Fraser Script (upper case only, inverted letters, punctuation marks for vowels, no cursive writing)
1. Removal of inverted letters, substitution of various other letters for inverted ones. Upper case only. No cursive.
2. Use of both lower case and upper case letters.
3. Introduction of cursive writing.
4. Regularization of habits: Capitalization of proper nouns, beginnings of sentences. Removal of spaces between each

syllable to allow spaces to mark words. Punctuation decisions.

5. Decisions on tones: [a] preserve the traditional system of periods, commas, etc., [b] use diacritics, or [c] use final letters so that no special font should be used.

Lastly, reports on the current attempts to introduce this advanced script are surveyed. Future actions will also be discussed.

1. Introduction

Lisu is spoken in China, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, India and perhaps Laos. It has been referred to by many alternate names, such as: Lissu, Lisaw, Li-Shaw, Li-Hsaw, Lu-Tzu, Lesuo, Li, Lishu, Leisu, Leshuopa, Loisu, Southern Lisu, Yao Yen, Yaw-Yen, Yaw Yin, Yeh-Jen, Chung, Cheli, Chedi, Lip'a, Lusu, Khae, Lip'o, Liso and Central Lisu.

Lisu belongs to the Central Loloish group of Tibeto-Burman languages. The Ethnologue lists 26 Loloish languages, some of which are: Akha, Lahu, Lipo, Naxi and Bisu. Lipo and Lolopo (Central Yi in China) are probably the most closely related languages.

The current homeland of the Lisu is in NW Yunnan, China (along the Nu (Salween) River), where the largest number of Lisu speakers still resides. It is currently spoken in West Yunnan, in the upper reaches of the Salween and Mekong River valleys, and in Sichuan in China by 575,000 people (1990 census). In Myanmar, Lisu speakers live around Lashio, in Wa State, around Myitkyina and Bhamo, around Putao towards Assam border, and around Loilem area in Shan States by 126,000 people (1987 estimate). In Thailand, over 25,000 Lisu speakers live in Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Mae Hongson, Tak, Sukhothai, Kamphaeng and Phet provinces. Some have migrated to northwest Thailand from Myanmar. There are over 1000 Lisu speakers in India too (Bradley 1994). Total population is estimated to be 657,000 by the Ethnologue, 635,000 by Wurm and Hattori (1981), and 900,000 from by Bradley (1994).

Analyses of Lisu dialects vary. The Ethnologue lists Hwa (Hua), Lisu (Flowery Lisu), White Lisu (Pai Lisu) and Lu

Shi Lisu as dialects, with all four dialects being spoken in Myanmar. The Lisu often use geography to distinguish among the subgroups. For instance, they might refer to themselves as Salween River Lisu, or Thailand Lisu (or differential themselves as Northern or Southern Salween Lisu).

David Morse prefers to use a classification into Northern, Central and Southern dialects, with a Union dialect that borrows from all three and allows Lisu speakers from different dialects to speak with and write to speakers of other dialects. Bradley (1994) locates Northern Lisu speakers (75% of total Lisu speakers) in NW Yunnan with some speakers in South Sichuan in China, N. Myanmar and NE. India. He locates Central Lisu speakers (20%) in Western Yunnan (Baoshan and Dehong Prefectures) and adjacent areas of N. Shan State in Myanmar; this dialect is the basis of the Fraser orthography. He locates Southern Lisu speakers (<5%) in SW Yunnan, S. Shan State, and Thailand. The dialect situation is complicated by national language borrowings from Chinese, Burmese or Thai.

Lisu is an SOV language; that is, in a simple Lisu sentence, the Subject is followed by the direct Object which is followed by the Verb. A clause consists of one verbal proposition and its associated words. In an unmarked sentence, it is normal for the verb to be the last word in a sentence. Particles (separate words) that follow nouns and verbs carry most of the grammatical marking; for instance, noun phrases contain required words to indicate topic *nyu*, possession, location, instrument, etc. These particles are optional following subjects and objects. The use of numbers with or without nouns requires use of classifiers.

2. Lisu Orthographies

Many books and booklets have been written in Lisu using two orthographies. A PinYing-based orthography is taught at the Kunming Institute in China. An older script designed by Fraser is in use in Myanmar and Thailand. Additional orthographies using Hindi, Thai and Burmese scripts have been designed, but they have not seen much use.

The first Lisu alphabet was designed around 1907, primarily by James O. Fraser, a British missionary, and was in serious use by 1918. It is comprised of 40 Roman characters: the normal Roman upper-case characters, with 15 additional characters that are inverted Roman upper-case letters. It has 30 consonants and 10 vowels. Six basic and eight combination tones are indicated using English punctuation marks, such as period, comma, colon and semicolon. These 6 markers and combos allow for all 14 tones occurring in Lisu to be correctly expressed.

In the late 1980's a modified alphabet using only "standard" Roman characters began to be used in some parts of China. This essentially changed only the 15 inverted characters plus the "ah" slide tone. However, the

new script was ambiguous in several vowels, did not allow for all fourteen tones, and it did not use the traditional Fraser tone symbols.

Printed material in both Fraser and Pinyin Lisu scripts include primers, many graded readers, health books, folktales, a few math books, a few booklets on Lisu traditional songs (courting and poetic), the Bible, religious instructional material, hymns and Bible commentaries. A Lisu-Chinese dictionary with an partial English-Lisu index was published in 1985; it represents Northern Lisu, especially that spoken in Nujiang Autonomous Prefecture of NW Yunnan.

3. Explanation of the original (Fraser) alphabet

Over time, the Fraser script seems to be more in use. There have been some refinements to the script. The description below refers to the current usage of the Fraser alphabet.

The Lisu Alphabet - Fraser script

(1) Consonants

B	P	d		D	T	↓
G	K	X		J	C	ç
Z	F	f		M	N	L
S	R	ʀ		ʌ	V	H
ɔ	ɾ	x		B		

(2) Semi-vowels

W	Y
---	---

(3) Vowels

A	ʌ	E	ɛ	I	O
U	ʊ	ɪ	ɔ		

(4) Tones

single . , .. ,. : ;

double :: ,: ..: ,,:
 -: ,; ..; ,;

(5) Punctuation

-	~	=	?	!	"	'	()
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----

(The question and exclamation marks are recent inclusions, beginning around 1985.)

(6) The "ah" slide and nasal tone

-	~
---	---

Several changes in the alphabet have occurred over the years. There is also now the awareness that not all letters in the alphabet are the same - some are consonants (called 'male characters' by the Lisu) and the rest are vowels ('female characters').

One change is that the inverted "B" is now considered a consonant, not a vowel (formerly it was the last letter in the alphabet).

(formerly)

A V H G F W X Y

(now)

A V H G F X B W Y

A second change is the awareness that the consonants W and Y are also sometimes used as vowels, and are now the last two letters in the consonant set.

A third change is attention given to some common misspellings:

(INCORRECT)

A B B -

nga bgha

o,

oe,

(CORRECT)

A B Q -

nga boex (appears so)

ɿ,

gheu, (to shake, wave)

4. Proposed "Advanced" Fraser Orthography

The fact that there was a general limitation in using the Fraser script in writing Lisu became very real to David Morse when the letter "M" flipped off the machine on the only manual typewriter in the whole isolated valley. This incident (August 1968) got Morse seriously thinking about an alternative way to write Lisu. At various times, several sheets of a "different" way of writing Lisu have been handed out to a few acquaintances.

In the mean time, many Lisu desiring higher education were leaving home and going to the larger towns or cities, using the major (government) language more than their own. Many married non-Lisu and the major/national language became the language children became the most familiar with. Many felt that learning the Lisu script was a dead-end effort, though many families still used Lisu in the home. Besides, English was being taught in the government schools in Myanmar, and that had more promise for the future in jobs and opportunity.

Why Make A Change?

A development of the Fraser system (called 'advanced' at the moment by the Lisu) is being proposed. The Lisu want to be able to do more with and in their own language, but they are hindered by the input system. New orthographies have been introduced using Burmese, Thai, Hindi and Chinese Pinyin alphabets, each of which have limitations. Many Lisu desired to be able to write the language with the typical English alphabet without losing expressability enjoyed in the Fraser script (eg. being able to clearly indicate all 14 tones and express all vowels). This would enable the use of cursive writing, as well as the use of all standard writing devices that use English including the typewriter and computer keyboard. It would also provide a motivation and facilitation for non-literate Lisu to learn to read and write Lisu, since it uses the English alphabet that the children are learning in government schools.

Care was taken with the implementation of this advanced Fraser script:

1. To show respect for the previous script as "heritage" (it is the foundation for the next stage), but to recognize its limitations and the need to move on.
2. To ensure a high transfer from the previous script because only the problematic characters would be changed—all the rest would be essentially unchanged.
3. The advanced level could be implemented one change (one stage) at a time, and introduced gradually.
4. The future of the script would be "secure", in that it would be open as far as being able to use typewriters, computers and even email.
5. The pros and cons were laid out clearly: What would be gained if changes are made? What happens if no change is made? The pros and cons are summarized in the table below.

ALS FLS*

easily learned	x	x
accommodates all dialects	x	x
can mark all occurring tones (for all dialects)	x	x
can allow borrowed words to be written	x	x
can be typed readily on any machine	x	
can use lower case and caps (for proper names)	x	
can use longhand	x	
can use any font style /family of typeface	x	
can join syllables	x	
can use spell-checker (option is there)	x	
can enhance learning other Roman script languages (similarity)	x	
one-time change (conversion) is good for foreseeable future	x	
attracts users not yet familiar with Fraser	x	
revives interest in Lisu writing with users already familiar with Fraser script	x	

* ALS - Advanced Lisu Script; FLS - Fraser Lisu Script

5. The Need For An Advanced Lisu Script

With the introduction of the Apple II computer in the early 1980's, it became even more evident that Lisu script was in a tight spot. After changing systems and word processors a number of times, a more serious look was given to a possible change — a second script that could be used if the normal one could not be used. At the same time, care was used not to push the issue. David Morse was content just point out some advantages.

By late 1990's, a number of Lisu were using computers and even using email. Many found the advanced script very usable in writing Lisu. Those familiar with any language using a normal Romanized script (English, Lahu, Jingphaw, Rawang, etc.) found the advanced Lisu script very easy to understand, and began to get excited that their own language could now be typed on any machine and could be written in longhand as well. Those of middle age, concerned with a steady loss of interest of the mother tongue, were also excited about this revival in interest in one's own language.

One point of interest: Due to some incident early on in the introduction of the Fraser Lisu script, the non-Christian people did not take to it as a general rule. A conscious effort is being made to include the non-Christian population in the development of this "advanced Lisu script", and care is being taken to promote the idea that this script is for all Lisu. Reading material with non-religious content, such as old Lisu folk stories, Aesop's Fables, etc. is also being readied for the general Lisu population to read.

Finally, care is being taken to make sure that people are aware that the advanced script is built upon the foundation of the old script (the old script is our heritage), and that change must happen slowly, with modifications if necessary.

6. Advancing to the "next stage" in Lisu writing

The following is a translation and summary of what is currently in the Lisu booklet used to implement the next step in Lisu orthography.

The learner is encouraged to take the transition levels/stages in order - advising that it is best not to "jump" too far ahead. If at least Stage 2 or Stage 3 is reached, the user can achieve a good level of proficiency and experience a great deal of satisfaction at his new capabilities. (So far, Stage 3 seems to be the goal of most learners.)

The five stages that are currently being tested in a few selected villages are:

(0) Stage Zero: Traditional Fraser Script (upper case only, inverted letters, punctuation marks for vowels, no cursive writing). This is what is currently being used. It is the "root" level.

(using all caps Roman letters, with 15 additional letters inverted plus and "ah" tone slide symbol - a period-level dash; the letter Q is unused).

(1) Stage One advancement: (Removal of inverted letters, substitution of various other letters for inverted ones. Upper case only. No cursive):

1. Using regular Roman letters to replace the original 15 inverted ones. (see Appendix A)

2. Adding "a" to all consonants instead of an "inherent 'a'".

(M = MA NY = NYA L = LA)

3. Replacing the "ah" slide symbol with a final consonant (BI_ LO = BIX LO)

(2) Stage Two advancement:

Use of both lower case and upper case letters.

(3) Stage Three advancement: This is the stage that most users feel is essential to get to: Using longhand, i.e. cursive writing.

(4) Stage Four advancement: Regularization of habits

1. Being aware of words vs. syllables: Joining syllables that make up a word. Removal of spaces between each syllable to allow spaces to mark words.

2. Capitalizing proper names, beginnings of sentences.

3. Punctuation decisions.

(5) Stage Five advancement: Decisions on tones: [a] preserve the traditional system of periods, commas, etc., [b] use diacritics, or [c] use final letters so that no special font should be used.

1. Replacing current tone symbols (6 basic, 8 combination) with final consonants.

2. Replacing current punctuation symbols (. , =) etc., with standard symbols (. , ,).

7. Examples Of The Five Stages Of Script Changes

(Step Zero being the original stage)

The following examples are taken from the first few lines in a Lisu folk story.

(Translation:)

A long time ago there was a rich man who raised a pig and a dog. He wanted to know which of the two was more worthy, which of the two should get the better food. He wanted to find out which of the two would be more useful.

(Interlinear equivalent in Fraser script)

A: N3 IV JO BO LI RO NY-
old time when rich man one person (BE)

A-WV; MI VN, T- A-N: MI
(a) pig as well raised (PAST), dog-as-well

VN, T NY- A LI LI XN: M
raised (PAST) (BE), which one-kind the

dN:- M: dN:- A LI LI XN: M
valuable, not valuable, which one-kind the

TV YI Z: DU MY: NYI JI, M
to-it (3SG)¹ food more good

GT: Z: N K, M SQ. NI, XN:- JO:=
give eat should know want to (SFP)²

YI SI, d B3 T VN J3: A LI
(3SG) master for domestic-animal which

LI XN: M MY: NYI JI, GU JO
one-kind the more good use have

M: JO M TV SQ. NI, XN:- JO:=
not-have the which know want to, (SFP).

¹ 3SG - Third Person Singular

² SFP - Sentence Final Particle - in this case meaning reported speech.

Stage Zero (original Fraser Script)

A: N3 1V JO BO LI RO NY-. A-WV; MI VN, T-. A-N; MI VN, T NY-. A LI LI XN: M dN:-. M: dN:-. A LI LI XN: M TV YI Z: DU MY: NYI JI, M G7: Z: N K, M SQ. NI, XN... JO:= YI SI. d B3 7 VN J3: A LI LI XN: M MY: NYI JI, GU JO M: JO M TV SQ. NI, XN... JO:=

Stage One (changing only inverted characters and /ai/ slide tone to regular characters)

A: NEW THAE TSO BO THI RO NY-. A-WAE;X MI VUH, T-. A-NA;X MI VUH TA NY-. A LI THI XUH: MA PHUH:-. MA: PHUH:-. A LI THI XUH: MA TAE YI ZA: DU MYA: NYI JI,X MA GEU: ZA: NA KA, MA SOE. NI, XUH,X-. JO:= YI SI. PHA BEW GHEU VUH JEW: A LI THI XUH: MA MYA: NYI JI, GU JO MA: JO MA TAE SOE. NI, XUH,X-. JO:=

Stage Two (introducing upper and lower case)

A: new thae tso bo thi ro nya-. a-wae;x mi vuh, ta-. a-na:x mi vuh, ta nya-. a li thi xuh: ma phuh:-. ma: phuh:-. a li thi xuh: ma tae yi za: du mya: nyi ji,x ma geu: za: na kax ma soe. ni. xuhx-. jo:= Yi si. pha bew gheu vuh jew: a li thi xuh: ma mya: nyi ji. gu jo ma: jo ma tae soe. ni. xuh,x-. jo:=

Stage Three (introducing cursive writing)

A: new thae tso bo thi ro nya-. a-wae;x mi vuh, ta-. a-na:x mi vuh, ta nya-. a li thi xuh: ma phuh:-. ma: phuh:-. a li thi xuh: ma tae yi za: du mya: nyi ji,x ma geu: za: na kax ma soe. ni. xuhx-. jo:= Yi si. pha bew gheu vuh jew: a li thi xuh: ma mya: nyi ji. gu jo ma: jo ma tae soe. ni. xuh,x-. jo:=

Stage Four (introducing joining syllables as words)

A: new thae tsobo thiro nya-. a-wae;x mi vuh, ta-. a-na:x mi vuh, ta nya-. a li thixuh: ma phuh:-. ma: phuh:-. a li thixuh: ma tae yi za: du mya: nyi ji,x ma geu: za: nakax ma soe. ni,xuhx-. jo:= Yi si. pha bewgheu vuhjew: a li thixuh: ma mya: nyi ji. gu jo ma: jo ma tae soe. ni,xuh,x-. jo:=

Stage Five (using final consonants for tone marks, and using the comma, period, etc., for punctuation)

Apnew thae tsobo thi ro nya. atwaeqx mi vuhr ta. atnapx mi vuhr ta nya. ali thixuhp ma phuhp. map phuhp. ali thixuhp ma tae yi zapdu myapnyi jirx ma geup zap na kax ma soet nicxuhx. jop. Yi sispha bewgheu vuhjewp ali thixuhp ma myapnyi jirgu jo map jo ma tae soet nicxuhsx. jop.

8. Some changes in Advanced Script

Two changes that have prompted the most discussion are the following:

1. The (7) vowel

There are two vowels that sound very similar, but are not the same in sound or usage, and are explained thus:

"Q" has a "soft" sound from the throat;

"7" has a "hard" sound from the throat. (explained as B and Q being added together)

In the original script the /7/ vowel is a single letter. However, during the development of the advanced script this vowel was a difficult one to deal with, until it was realized that it was actually a combination of (BQ). In keeping with the concept of a high level of transfer from the original script, it was found that it was best to use "eu" for this vowel, but with the following "rules" for use:

a. - if the vowel (eu) occurs after a consonant, only "eu" need be written.

(B7. = BEU. D7: = DEU: L7. = LEU.)

b. - if the vowel (eu) follows another vowel, the letters "gh" must first be added before "eu" (e.g.: gheu)

(10: 7 = THO: GHEU B3 7 = BEW GHEU)

c. - if the vowel (eu) stands alone, the letters "gh" must first be added before "eu" (gheu)

(7: 8 = GHEU ZHA

7. LV: XO = GHEU. LAE: KHO)

2. The final /a/ tone tone mark

The original script uses a "dash" at period-level after a syllable to indicate an "ah" tone. In the advanced script, a final "x" is used. (This is not quite satisfactory to some current Fraser script users, but no other all-around solution has been worked out. The "x" suffix does not cause any conflict and meets all the needs of the language, and passes the "handwriting" test.)

JE. LO	JEX LO	is going
DA. LO	DAEX LO	is climbing
du BU. LO	PHU BUHX LO	owes money
YI; M7. LO	YI; MEUX LO	is sleeping
JE FI. LO	JE TZIX LO	is allowed to go
7. LO	TSAX LO	is hot
BI. LO	BI,X LO	is pretty
BI. LO	BI,X LO	is full
BA. LO	BAEX LO	said (is saying)
AU. LO	NGUX LO	is crying

9. Reports on Implementation

1. Responses to introducing the new script

Response to the Advanced Lisu Script has been mostly positive. A few negative responses have been reported coming mainly from senior pastors (age 60 and above) who have not had opportunity to take education in public schools, and for whom the Lisu Fraser script is the only form of writing they know. The learning curve at their age is the main objection. A few voiced concern over possible divisiveness. However, after explaining that the new form would not be replacing the old form (just building up from that base), that ten or more years would

probably be needed for learning and transition, and it was also pointed out that the young people are not currently being motivated to learn reading and writing Lisu, the older Lisus agreed that if a change were not started soon, it would be too late.

Some people had questions about availability of printed material in the Advanced Script. In response to this query two booklets were printed for review. One was a small hymnbook with about 50 hymns which has been very popular; the other was the book of Galatians from the Bible. A third booklet with stories (like Aesop's Fables) is soon to be distributed as well.

2. Acceptance of the Advanced Lisu script

The general response so far has been excited acceptance up to Stage 3 (using upper and lower case, and learning longhand). There seems to be a very strong desire to keep the traditional Fraser tone marking system (using combinations of the period, comma, colon and semi-colon).

For some readers already familiar with English or other languages using Roman script (such as Jing Paw, Lahu, Ahka, Rawang), it takes about 15-30 minutes to be able to begin reading the Advanced Lisu Script. Within a week or so, many of them are practicing writing Lisu in longhand. The general feeling seems to be: "At last, we can write using any typing machine, and also use longhand—we have full freedom in expressing ourselves."

Incidentally, there was real excitement among a few Lisu with higher education living in cities who are computer literate, that now the Lisu language could be used on any machine to communicate across the world.

3. Implementation

The current plan is to introduce the Advanced Lisu Script to about 20 people, train them, and then during a long (public) school break, have these people teach small groups of children in the evenings. An important step in implementation has been taken by working through the Lisu Cultural Committee in Myanmar (Burma). They have been able to keep in touch with all groups of Lisu and help to explain questions that have been brought up.

Currently, the plan is to start with two villages. Booklets have been prepared for this, and training will take place in Fall of 2000.

4. Problems encountered

Some of the Lisu in Myanmar were concerned that the government may not allow a "new" script to be used. However, after a member of the Lisu Cultural Committee talked to some of the government departments, and explained that the Advanced Lisu script was just that—advancing from all-capitals to upper and lower case, just like kindergarten going on to upper levels, and there

seemed to be no objections. In fact, one official said this was good, now even he (a Burmese national) could read it a bit!

There have not been any real problems reported to date. The fact that the Advanced script is based on an already-proven and usable script seems to be of some value, and spellings are being kept consistent with what has become known as Union Lisu (or book language). Trials so far have gone quite smoothly.

5. Anecdotal report

In May, Tom Tehan was talking with a Lisu woman in Chiang Mai, Thailand, who runs a youth hostel with her husband. They have between 15 and 20 young Lisu people between the ages of 6 and 16 who have access to better Thai schools by living in the hostel. After school, the couple take time to teach the children things in Lisu. Lisu is also the language of communication and living in the hostel. She speaks, reads and writes both Thai and English well.

Tom showed her the Lisu transitional materials to the advanced Fraser script. She was curious about the script at first. Within five minutes she was able to work her way through the examples contained in this conference paper. She was very excited.

The first thing she said was that perhaps the older Lisu people wouldn't want to change. Then she said, "We need this to teach the children in the hostel." She went on to say that the children in the hostel are studying English in Thai schools, so they will be able to make the transition quickly. She was excited because now she felt that the Lisu young people would be motivated to learn to read and write Lisu.

Most Lisu young people now become literate in the national language, and acquire some familiarity with English, but they never learn to write their first language, Lisu. She felt that the advanced Lisu script would make it easy and fulfilling for the students in her hostel to learn to read Lisu.

She wanted more educational literacy materials to learn the advanced script. Tom told her they were at the printing press now and she would get 10 copies or so when they are ready.

Tom saw her again in June. She was excited about the advanced script. She said that everyone but the youngest children (who hadn't studied much English yet) picked up on the advanced script quickly and they were excited about being able to read Lisu. She was really eager to get more materials in the advanced script to use with the children in the hostel.

Appendix A

Comparison Chart for the Lisu Alphabet

B	P	d	D	T	l	G	K	X
B	P	PH	D	T	TH	G	K	KH
b	p	ph	d	t	th	g	k	kh
J	C	ɔ	Z	F	ɟ	M	N	L
J	C	CH	Z	Tz	TS	M	N	L
j	c	ch	z	tz	ts	m	n	l
S	R	ʀ	Λ	V	H	ɔ	r	x
S	R	ZH	NG	V	H	Q	F	X
s	r	zh	ng	v	h	q	f	x
			B	W	Y			
			GH	W	Y			
			gh	w	y			
A	V			E	ɛ	I	O	
A	AE			E	EW	I	O	
a	ae			e	ew	i	o	
		U	n			ɿ	ɑ	
		U	UH			EU	OE	
		u	uh			eu	oe	

Appendix B

Comparison of words in Stage 3:

A LI	a li	how
A. N:	a.na:	dog
A. WV;	awae:	pig
A: Xl.	a: kheu.	very
A: N3 LV:	a: new thae:	a long time ago
B3 T:	bew gheu:	for
BI LE	bi le	become full
CI DU	chi du	footprints
CI L	chi la	arrive (from)
CI YE	chi ye	arrive (to)
DO JE	do je	went out
DO LE	do le	finished
JO BO	tsobo	rich person
G7: L	geu: la	give (receive)
G7: KQ	geu: koe	gave (away)
GO., L3	go., lew	in that way
GO., M	go., ma	that (definite)
GO., PO.	go., po.	that way
GO., LV:	go., thae:	that time, then
HO: JE	ho: je	lead (away)
HO: L	ho: la	lead (toward)
HW. CI	hwa. chi	awake
JL. QU	ji., gu	purpose
K. LV;	ka. lae:	cross-wise
K. NV.	ka. nae.	after
KQ LE	koe le	happened
KQ M	koe ma	that which happened
L: JE	la: je	went back
LE BE	le be	like /similar to
LO. NYI	lo. nyi	see / look upon

M: JO	ma: jo	not have
M: A	ma: nga	not so
M7: Xl;	meu: kheu:	dusk
MY: NYI	mya: nyi	more
N K,	na ka.	should (imperative)
N, M	na. ma	in order to
Ni, J	ni. tsa	hurry
Ni, XN	ni. xuh	want, would like
NYI. NYI	nyi. nyi	today
P7. DU	peu. du	because of
dY3; L	phyew. la	happen
SV; 1N;	sae: thuh:	work hard
Sl. d:	si. pha:	lord, master
1 PO.	tha po.	from then till now
T3, NYI	tew. nyi	look upon, look at
1I: XN:	thi: xuh:	one thing
Λ LO	nga lo	is so
V MI	va mi	field
VN., J3:	vuh., jew:	domestic animal
YI. W:	yi. wa:	they (plural)
YI. Z7	yi. zeu	continue to
YI; T.	yi. ta.	sleep
Z., d7:	za., pheu:	rice bran
Z: DU	za: du	food (edibles)

Appendix C

Changes in Stage Five

Note on (; = Q)

The letter "Q" is not part of the former Lisu alphabet set, so it needs some explanation. It is to be used here as a final consonant to indicate a glottal stop.

N3. BV;	LV; J3
new. baeq	laeq jew

Punctuation changes in Stage Five:

Stage Zero	Stage Five
(.)	(,)
(=)	(;)

Tone symbols in Stage Five: replacing Fraser symbols with final consonants

Single Symbols

˙	t	high
˘	e	rising
˘˘	s	mid-tight
˘˘	r	mid-breathy
˘˘	p	low
˘˘	q	stop
˘˘	x	sliding "ah"

Double Symbols

˙˙	m
˙˙	g
˙˙˙	v
˙˙˙	b
˙˙˙	j
˙˙˙	k
˙˙˙	f
˙˙˙	d

Example:

Stage Zero	Stage 5	Gloss
M. d	mat phap	teacher (male)
NV; NV	naeq nae	early morning
V; MQ;	viq moeq	hungry
NV; KW	naeq kwa	inside of
1I LE; JE	thi lek je	go together

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Orthography as literacy: how Manx was 'reduced to writing'

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Abstract¹

Manx Gaelic was the vernacular of the Isle of Man, a semi-independent state located in the Irish Sea. Its last first-language speaker died in 1974, leaving an English-speaking island where Manx has mainly a ceremonial role. Manx has gone beyond 'endangerment,' to death and a limited resurrection.

Though related to Scottish and Irish Gaelic, Manx has an orthography that is notably different from the orthographic traditions of both its close relatives, and incorporates a number of English conventions. This 'historical abomination' (Fargher (1979:vi) or 'encumbrance' (O'Rahilly (1976:120-121) remains one of the most striking, and most controversial, aspects of Manx as it takes steps towards revival.

Written Manx was mainly developed by clergy whose first language (or main language of literacy) was English. Their project was not the promotion of Manx as a language, but an Anglicising and anti-Catholic one. The clergyman John Kelly, one of the translators of the Manx bible, later wrote: "By the publication of Gaelic books, and [...] by the clergy being obliged to understand, and to use the Gaelic tongue, the Roman Catholic faith was entirely superseded in Man." In this project, orthography seems to have had an unexpectedly important role; Kelly himself believed that reading Gaelic 'through an English medium' would promote the learning of English, and ultimately the acceptance of the Anglican religion.

In this paper, I will show how the circumstances of Manx literacy, introduced through the Church by English-Manx bilinguals, ensured that Manx orthography would in some ways resemble that of English. While on the one hand this may have hastened the decline of Manx at the expense of English, on the other hand it has maintained the separation of Manx from its relatives, ensuring that in its written form at least, it could not be relegated to the status of a 'dialect'. Thus for Manx, orthography is bound up with both decline and independence;

¹ I gratefully acknowledge the help, at different stages, of the following: Rhisiart Hincks, Mark Kermode and Robert Thomson. Any errors of fact or interpretation are, of course, my own.

'endangerment' contains the seeds of revival.

1. Introduction

In this paper I take the view that orthography is an aspect of literacy which can be theorised, like literacy itself, in terms of an 'ideological' or an 'autonomous' approach (Street 1984). The traditional approach to orthography has treated it largely as autonomous, separate from issues of culture and practice. I shall argue the value of an ideological approach. Using Manx as a case study, and drawing on a cross-linguistic study (in progress) of the social and cultural aspects of orthographic systems, I will discuss the relationship between orthography, literacy, and bilingualism, exploring the role of orthography in the process of language shift.

The language I shall discuss here is Manx, also known as Manx Gaelic (Gaelg Vanninagh), spoken on the Isle of Man, which lies in the Irish Sea approximately equidistant from England, Scotland and Ireland. The population of the island is approximately 70,000, of whom slightly less than half were born on the island. Manx is a Celtic language "very closely related to the now extinct Gaelic dialects of neighbouring Ulster and Galloway" (Thomson and Pilgrim:1) and only very distantly related to English. Manx itself effectively became extinct as a spoken language with the death of its last 'native speaker' in 1974; however, it retains a ceremonial role in Manx life and is the focus of a small but committed revivalist movement.

Manx has a written tradition dating back at least to the early 17th century. In the past, though some scholarly attention has been given to Manx literature, there has been little mention of Manx orthography,² except for the fact, widely noted, that Manx orthography is strikingly different from that of Manx's closest relatives, Irish and Scots Gaelic.

In this paper, I shall argue that Manx orthography, like all orthographies, is the product of an intersection of social as well as linguistic factors. I shall focus on three of these here: bilingualism, literacy practices (the cultural practices surrounding reading and writing) and language ideology.

² The main exception is Thomson (1969).

2. Orthography as bilingualism

Standardisation of a vernacular, according to Joseph (1987), invariably involves modelling the new standard language on an already existing standard. Normally the language which provides this model is the language which already fulfils the functions of a "high" language (Ferguson 1959) in the community. Standardisation is thus usually a process which involves a bilingual elite, who are able to transfer the conventions of the old standard to the new one.

Although writing a language and standardising its spelling are by no means one and the same thing, Joseph's point could equally well be made with respect to development of an orthography for a previously unwritten language: with very few exceptions, it is a process involving a bilingual scribal or educated class, who transfer or adapt the conventions of their language of primary literacy to the other language.³

This can be seen to have happened more than once in the history of English orthography. The Roman alphabet, originally designed for Latin and providing a reasonably close match between characters and phonemes, was first adapted to representing Anglo-Saxon, a language only distantly related to Latin. Later, Anglo-Norman began to be written in England before continental French orthography was stabilised, by scribes familiar with the West Saxon (English) scribal orthographic tradition (Scragg 1974). Both French and Old English conventions survived in Anglo-Norman, and were reintroduced to Chancery English when English again took over the "high" language functions in England. Modern Standard English thus contains a mixture of conventions of which the most pervasive, arguably, derives from Latin - the use of the Roman alphabet itself.

One might well argue that half a millenium or so of independent scribal or print tradition would be enough to allow a language to call its orthography its own rather than an adaptation of a foreign system. In that case, some of the languages of Europe and Asia could be said to have their "own" systems of orthography, while many others have orthographies which are modelled on those of other languages with longer literate traditions.⁴

³ One set of exceptions, of course, are those languages which have their orthography devised by linguists using a "scientifically" designed writing system which is not actually that of their own native language. Nevertheless, it is still usually the case that the system which they devise for the newly-written language has a great deal in common with the native language of the linguists. Hence languages "given" an orthography by North American and European linguists usually use an alphabetic system based on the Roman Alphabet, while languages whose written forms have been developed by linguists from the former Soviet Union typically have alphabetic systems based on Cyrillic. See Winner (1952) for one account of the latter.

⁴ For example, both Bahasa Indonesia and Sranan Tongo,

If development of an orthography involves transfer of conventions from another, culturally or politically dominant language, orthographic decisions necessarily involve an element of politics. Far from being a neutral process, the introduction of orthography - involving as it does an educated elite and the choice of a model - always seems to be socially, culturally and ideologically charged.⁵

In the case of Manx, the choice of orthography can be seen to be closely bound up with bilingualism on the one hand, and with the practices connected with literacy on the other. In the remainder of this paper, I will examine this in more detail.

3. The Manx Orthography

The written tradition in Manx, as far as can be definitely ascertained, dates back only to the 17th century, though Manx must have been used in writing before that, if only for place names. The orthography of the earliest known book in Manx was largely the invention of John Phillips, who was Bishop of Sodor and Mann 1605 - 1633. According to Thomson (1969:178), Phillips, together with at least one other person, translated the Book of Common Prayer into Manx, probably between 1605 and 1610.

Phillips, who was probably a native of North Wales, would have known the Welsh orthography of the time, though he and his co-writer "adopted for the consonants a system fairly close to that of contemporary English" (Thomson 1969:181), while relying more on Welsh, Latin, Italian or Spanish for the vowel symbols. Phillips's orthography marks the phonemic contrasts of Manx where English orthography provides the means for doing so, but "ignores those distinctions which English has no need to make" (Thomson 1969:181). Phillips's translation of the Book of Common Prayer was not published in his lifetime, and a single manuscript copy survived from which an edition was finally produced in 1894.

Following Phillips, Thomas Wilson (Bishop 1698 - 1755) set about having the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible translated into Manx. "Principles and Duties of Christianity" (Coyrle Sodjeh) appeared in Manx and English in 1707. According to Thomson 1969:184, "in

spoken in colonies of the Netherlands, faithfully reproduced at one time some of the historical idiosyncrasies of Dutch spelling, for example using <oe> for /u/ and <ie> for /i/; elsewhere French, Portuguese and Spanish conventions have been evident in the orthographies of vernacular languages in French, Portuguese and Spanish colonies at various times. Other, less obvious, examples are provided by languages which have developed under the cultural and/or political domination of neighbouring states, for example, the old Estonian orthographic tradition, based on German (Kurman 1968).

⁵ See Sebba (1998) for an elaboration of this assertion.

this work the spelling of the Manx text, though not fully developed into the near uniformity of the second half of the century, is already clearly the same system as that in use later and as clearly marks a break with the Phillipsian type except in that both are non-Gaelic.⁶⁰

Like the orthographic tradition of Phillips, the modern Manx orthography, based on that of Wilson, shows many conventions which derive from English, and moreover are identifiably "English" as they are not widely found with these values in the orthographies of other languages. Table 1 gives some examples of these.

Manx spelling and example	Sound	Other languages with this convention
<oo> <i>Doolish</i>	/u:/	?
<ee> <i>skeet</i>	/i:/	?
<ck> (syllable final) <i>casherrick</i>	/k/	German, Swedish, Dutch
<sh> <i>Doolish</i>	/ʃ/	Swahili, Zulu etc.

Table 1. Manx conventions which derive from English

As an example of how the Manx conventions correspond to English ones, here is part of a "specimen text" in Manx (in capitals) from Thomson and Pilgrim (p. 10), accompanied by their "approximate pronunciation using the English spelling system as a basis" (with stressed syllables underlined), and a gloss:

AYR AIN T'AYNS NIAU,
Airine tunss n-yow,
father at-us [who] is in heaven

CASHERICK DY ROW DT'ENNYM;
casherrick the row th'ennem
hallowed be thy name

DY JIG DIY REERIAGHT;
the jig the ree-reeacht
come thy kingdom

DI'AIGNEY DY ROW JEANT ER Y TALLOO
th'ahgnier the row jint erra tolloo
thy will be done on earth

MYR T'EH AYNS NIAU.
mer teh unss n-yow
as is it in heaven

Thomson and Pilgrim stress that their "transcription" of

the Manx is "only a very rough approximation of the English sounds, and is in no way scientifically accurate". It is meant to show the English reader with no prior knowledge of Manx or its orthography the approximate sound of the words. Yet it is remarkable how the conventions of the "transcription" parallel the standard Manx orthography. It is almost as though the conventional Manx orthography served a similar purpose to Thomson and Pilgrim's "transcription", namely to help a reader familiar with the English spelling conventions to sound the Manx words.

By contrast, both Scots and Irish Gaelic have numerous conventions which are not found in English, and likewise have no role in Manx orthography. Among these are the use of digraphs like <dh> and <mh> and accents to indicate long vowels, <ì> where Manx has <ee> and <ù> where Manx has <oo>.

A look at the first few lines of the Lord's Prayer in standard Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic shows how different from Manx those languages look when written down:

Gaelg (Manx)	Gàidhlig (Scots)	Gaeilge (Irish)
Ayr ain t'ayns niau, casherrick dy row dt'ennym. Dy jig dty reeriaght. Dt'algnei dy row jeant er y thalloo myr t'eh ayns niau.	Ar n-Athair a tha air nèamh: gu naomhaichear d'ainm. Thigeadh dorloghachd. Deanar do thoil air an talamh, mar a nithear air nèamh.	Ár n-athair, atá ar neamh: gu naofar d'ainm. Go dtaga do riocht. Go ndéantar do thoil ar an talamh, mar dhéantar ar neamh.

Though the Philips and Wilson orthographies for Manx differed from each other, it is clear that both were strongly influenced by the conventions of English of the time. From this we can begin to see the importance of the role of bilinguals in determining the form of the orthography. As Thomson points out (Thomson 1969:193) in respect of the translation of religious works into Manx which went on apace in the second half of the eighteenth century:

nothing of all this translation work could be carried out by monoglot Manxmen [...] the clergy who undertook this work were locally educated, it is true, but through English and in the classics, only informally and occasionally through or in Manx, and for some of them, depending on their upbringing, it must have been a second rather than a first language in terms of status if not always in terms of order of acquisition.

⁶⁰ Thomson quotes Bishop Wilson's introduction: "They that have had the Trouble of Writing it, are very Sensible that the Liberty which every Man takes of Writing after his own Way, will expose them to some censure". In other words, orthography was only partly standardised and most likely, based on perceived phonetic similarities between Manx and English. A similar situation may be found today in much written English-lexicon Creole; see Sebba (1998).

Thus the Manx orthographic conventions which have come down to the present can be seen to be the work of bilinguals and, in particular, clergy. Indeed, as Thomson notes, for some of the translators Manx may not even have been a first language; and certainly, they were far more used to writing English, and perhaps even Latin and Greek, than Manx.

4. Orthography as literacy practice

In what Street calls the *ideological model* of literacy, (1984:8), it is assumed, inter alia, that the meaning of literacy within a culture depends on the social institutions within which it is embedded and that the processes whereby reading and writing are learnt are what construct their meaning for particular practitioners.

Furthermore, according to Scribner and Cole (1981:236), literacy is "a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use."

The practices involving literacy in which a community engages are inevitably related to the type of orthography which will emerge as one of the technologies underpinning those practices.⁷ This is particularly true in bilingual (especially diglossic bilingual) communities where literacy is introduced to the "low" or vernacular language through the medium of another, better established and more prestigious language.

The history of Manx orthography illustrates this. Even following Phillip's work on the Book of Common Prayer, Manx was essentially an unwritten language, and in the 18th century, "most Manxmen were illiterate in their own language and even those who could write did not write in Manx" (Thomson 1969:179). This was inevitable, given that "all attempts at elementary education took it for granted that a knowledge of English reading and writing was the goal to be aimed at" (Thomson 1969:180).

Some idea of what "literacy" in English may have meant for many people may be gained from the following, from a letter from Bishop Hildesley to the Archbishop of York, 1762:

The Manks people [...] would be, I am confident, extremely fond of perusing the scriptures, if they had them, and were taught to read them, in their own tongue, as they are the English Bibles; which latter, numbers can do very roundly, whilst they scarce understand the meaning of a single sentence; nay, I

might say, I believe, of some, a single word!

(Butler 1799:422).

In other words, some of those who could "read" could sound the English letters, but had little idea of the language they represented. At least until the Bible and other religious material became widely available in Manx in printed form in the 1760s (largely through the work of Hildesley himself) the main use of written Manx seems to have been by clergy literate in English, who used Manx religious material for reading in church or in their pastoral work with Manx monolinguals. The majority of literate lay people had little or no access to anything written in Manx at least until the second half of the 18th century.

We can see how in Manx society in the 18th century, literacy in Manx and literacy in English had different social meanings and were embedded in different social practices. While literacy in English may have been seen as a desirable goal in itself, leading to social and economic advancement, literacy in *Manx* served mainly to support religious activities. The available evidence suggests that the reading of Manx was largely the preserve of those who already could read English to some degree.⁸ From 1769, after the appearance of the Bible in Manx, it was possible for "masters of families, and others, who are well disposed, [to] read to the ignorant and illiterate the Sacred Oracles in their own language" (Butler 1799:227). Very likely some of these "masters of families" were the same people who some years previously could read the English Bible "very roundly", in Hildesley's words, but understanding little or nothing of what they read.

This also gives an indication of how the social practices surrounding reading and writing in Manx related to the nature of the Manx orthography which was being developed at that time largely for the purposes of Bible translation. For both the clergy and lay people Manx would be mainly a read and spoken, rather than a written, language. For both groups Manx literacy was secondary to English literacy in terms of both order and status. For both groups, written Manx would have a strong identification with the Church, whereas written English was seen to have a wider range of uses. Thus the transfer of conventions from English orthography to Manx served the purposes of both the clergy, who were already fully literate in English, and the lay people, for most of whom their limited literacy derived from schooling in English.

Under these circumstances, it was almost inevitable that a

⁷ For example, see Barros (1995:282-3) on the controversies between linguists and missionaries concerning appropriate orthographies for indigenous Mexican languages, and the differing literacy practices promoted by each group.

⁸ According to Stowell and O' Breasláin (1996:8-9), Hildesley in the 1750s found only three parishes where Manx was used as a medium of instruction. His response was "to make available teaching material in Manx and to limit the use of English", and to encourage teachers who could teach in Manx. For a time, Manx became established as teaching medium in nearly all parishes, only to go into a decline again soon after Hildesley's death in 1772.

Manx orthography would develop that would resemble that of English⁹ in some respects.

5. Ideology, orthography and language shift

It is clear from the history of Manx that, for several centuries, it fought a losing battle against the encroachment of English. The eventual result was complete language shift - from being almost entirely monolingual in Manx, the population of the island became almost exclusively monolingual in English. In this section, I want to examine the role of orthography in this language shift.

In the 18th century, as Thomson has stated, the goal of elementary education in Mann was a knowledge of English reading and writing (Thomson 1969:180). Implicit in this is a view that English was the superior language, which would confer on its speakers opportunities for advancement which would remain closed to monolingual Manx speakers.

In the 20th century, the creation of orthographies for previously unwritten languages has often been seen as a kind of gift to their speakers, bringing in its wake empowerment of the indigenous population and other benefits of literacy, spiritual and material. However, given the fate of a language like Manx - virtual extinction - it is reasonable to examine critically the beliefs and motives of those who introduced writing to the language. In the case of Manx, we have an explicitly ideological statement from John Kelly, a Manxman who as a young man was involved in Bible translation work in the service of Bishop Hildesley, and who had a key role in the production of the Manx Bible. Kelly went on to produce a grammar and two dictionaries of Manx (Thomson 1969:186). It is instructive to quote from the introduction to his "Triglott Dictionary" (English/Scottish/Irish/Manx Gaelic), dated 1805.¹⁰ At the outset, he puts forward "unity of language" as a virtue:

To cultivate a language and to improve a people are similar offices. [...] Wilson and Hildesley ['s] motives were religious and moral; but the present state of the empire holds out to government and individuals another motive at this time not less imperious, that unity of language is the surest cement of civil as well as of religious establishments. [It] has long been the policy of France to render her language universal, and she has acquired more influence by its becoming the court language of Europe than even by her arms in the field [...]

Next, he laments the loss of an opportunity in Ireland:

⁹ See also Thompson (1965:180).

¹⁰ Kelly's text should be read in its historical context, that of the Napoleonic Wars.

Had books been printed in [Irish] Gaelic, and Gaelic schools established in those parts of Ireland where Gaelic is the vulgar tongue, the people would have acquired learning by using the English alphabet, - they would have read English before they could read Irish, by reading Irish through an English medium [...]

Thus in Ireland, the publication of *Gaelic* books using the "English" alphabet could have promoted a knowledge of *English*, with desirable consequences: the removal of "deplorable ignorance, poverty and bigotry". The source of this wretchedness, it is implied, was the Catholic church, for

By the publication of Gaelic books, and more particularly by the clergy being obliged to understand, and to use the Gaelic tongue, the Roman Catholic faith was entirely superseded in Man. Of thirty thousand inhabitants, there is not to be found one native who is a Roman Catholic, nor a single dissenter from the Established Church of England. The same wisdom exercised by the rulers of the Church of Scotland, has produced similar effects in the Highlands. By their clergy being obliged to use the Gaelic language in the Highland parishes, the national and political prejudices, which formerly existed so strongly there, are entirely removed, and the knowledge of the English language, in consequence of the publication of the Gaelic Scriptures and Gaelic books, is everywhere gaining ground. And when there shall be one national language, then only will the union of the empire be completely established.

Here we start to see an imperial and religious project which has language shift as an intermediate goal, and in which orthography plays a small but perhaps pivotal part.¹¹ Literacy in Gaelic, Kelly implies, can provide the crucial transitional step to literacy in English; and once literacy in English has been attained, there is no need for any other kind. The consequence, according to Kelly, is necessarily the loss of Gaelic: "it is true that in process of time this cultivation of the Gaelic language will destroy the language itself, as a living language; but it will have produced the knowledge of a better, and will descend to

¹¹ For a remarkably similar case concerning the "alphabetisation" of Turkic languages in the Soviet Union by means of the Cyrillic alphabet, see Winner (1952.) According to Pravda at the time, "the transition to the Russian script will contribute to an even greater unification of the peoples of the USSR, to an even greater strengthening of the friendship of the peoples of the USSR". Likewise, in Mexico, where there was disagreement between "indigenist" linguists and missionaries, "each group tried to convince the Mexicans that its own alphabet style would accomplish more effectively the Mexican goal of unifying the Nation-State, one by the use of the national language orthography [i.e. Spanish], the other by employing the same phonetic symbols for all indigenous languages" (Barros 1995:282).

posterity by means of the press in a more perfect state" [i.e. as a "dead" language like Latin].

Of course, the fact that Kelly believed that the spread of publications in Manx would be the mechanism of language shift to English does not mean that it actually happened thus. Nevertheless, if his desired outcome was the replacement of Manx by English he could not have been disappointed by the state of affairs today. Likewise, the fact that he placed great importance on becoming literate "by using the English alphabet" does not prove that language shift would have been prevented or delayed if Manx literacy had been spread using some other kind of orthography. What is interesting, however, is that Kelly himself saw it as an important factor. Nor would his ideas be dismissed out of hand today. A contemporary linguist, Coulmas has written (1989: 233):

Given that [transitional literacy facilitating later literacy in a language of wider communication] is a major objective of designing an orthography for a hitherto unwritten language, it is highly desirable that the new orthography differ as little as possible from that language of wider communication which is of greatest functional value for the speech community in question.

A pessimistic view of vernacular literacy, namely that it is the direct route to language shift and the consequent loss of traditional culture, has been taken recently by Peter Mühlhäusler. In a chapter entitled "Reducing"¹² Pacific languages to writings" he concludes that "if the aim is that of preserving cultures, then the entire enterprise of literacy will have to be rethought. [...] Literacy has in the past promoted numerous invisible-hand processes of culture and language change. [...] Vernacular literacy involves much more than merely devising the optimal orthography for a given language as many linguists would have us believe." (Mühlhäusler 1990:205)

Drawing a parallel between the cases studied by Mühlhäusler - mainly among indigenous island peoples of the Pacific - and this other small island of Mannin, we may infer that Manx literacy may in fact have hastened the demise of Manx as a spoken language and that the English-influenced Manx orthography, though not actually devised with the goal of language shift in mind, played its part in this.

Having suggested in this section that the Manx orthography may have played the role of a Trojan horse encouraging the decline of Manx, in the next section I shall discuss how it may paradoxically have helped to preserve the independence of Manx as a language separate

¹² The use of quotation marks around 'reducing' is ironic, implying that little will remain of some of these languages beyond a few written texts. cf. Kelly's claim that Manx would "descend to posterity by means of the press in a more perfect state".

from Gaelic.

6. Manx orthography and autonomy

One of the most persistent criticisms of Manx orthography is that it does not resemble the orthographies of its closest relatives, Scots and Irish Gaelic. Fargher, for example, writes in the preface to his dictionary (1979:vi): "My own view, also shared by many respected and authoritative speakers of the language, is that this system is a historical abomination, separating, as it does, Mann from the rest of Gaeldom, and thus destroying the linguistic unity of the Gaels without replacing it with anything better in the way of a truly phonetic orthography".

The view that Manx orthography is "an abomination" appears to have been shared by O'Rahilly, who states (1976:120-121): "Phillips and his successors, indeed, removed the reproach that it was an unwritten language; but in so doing they encumbered it with an orthography which was hardly more fitted to represent its sounds than the orthography of Early Modern Irish would have been."¹³

While clearly, Manx might have benefited from an orthography which was tailored to indicate the phonemic contrasts relevant in a Gaelic language, it is not obvious that a Manx orthography based on that of other Gaelic languages would in the long run have served it better, as I shall argue below.

Kloss (1967) introduced the concepts of *ausbau* ("development") and *abstand* ("distance") for discussing the relationship between similar languages and language varieties as they develop (or fail to develop) into standard literary languages. *Abstand* refers to linguistic distance from other, similar languages. Languages which differ in terms of *ausbau* include "dialects whose speakers would certainly be reported by linguists as constituting a single linguistic community if they were at a preliterate stage" but which nevertheless follow different paths of elaboration to become two or more separate literary standards. In this way they become recognised as "different languages." Kloss gives Scots Gaelic and Irish Gaelic among his examples of this (7:29).

Where there is insufficient distance between related varieties to establish the claims of one variety to be

¹³ cf. Thomson (p. 180) on this point: "We may doubt whether in any case it would have been a great advantage to Manxmen to have a traditional Gaelic orthography for their language, for the more perfectly the system was adjusted to the facts of Manx pronunciation the less help it would be to Manxmen in reading Scottish or Irish Gaelic because of the numerous sound-changes that have overtaken Manx, and that reading would in any case have been complicated by the impoverishment of vocabulary already referred to."

autonomous from another, adopting divergent orthographies can provide a useful way of creating a *sense* of difference, even to the point of mutual unintelligibility.¹⁴ Orthographic debates in various different languages¹⁵ can partly be seen as a struggle over symbolic *abstand* which will support linguistic autonomy and *ausbau* in the first instance, possibly later being used to bolster claims of national identity and independence. Conversely, minimising orthographic distance can help to create "language unity" and foster cultural detente, as in the case of Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia.¹⁶ (Vikor 1988).

At the cost of making it appear superficially more like English, Manx's very un-Gaelic orthography helps to provide it with autonomy from the other Gaelic languages which, though under threat, are in a relatively enviable position in comparison to Manx. Instead, what mutual intelligibility might have existed between the written languages is minimised by the great differences in orthography. With Manx precariously poised between revival and extinction, this might not be such a bad thing. Had Manx shared its orthography with Scots or Irish Gaelic, it may well have come under pressure from these near relations, losing its claim to linguistic independence in spite of its substantial differences from both. The "linguistic unity" which Fargher mentions does not necessarily hold equal benefits for all parties; compare the case of English and Scots.

7. Conclusions

¹⁴ The different spelling conventions which distinguish American from British Standard English could be seen as a very mild example of this, and the different scripts used by Serbian and Croatian, or Hindi and Urdu, as extreme examples.

¹⁵ For example, in Haitian Creole (Schieffelin and Doucet 1994), where opposing factions favour <c> (French-like) or <k> (autonomous) for /k/; in Galician (Herrero Valeiro, 1993, Alvarez-Caccamo and Herrero Valeiro 1996), where the issue is similarity to or difference from the conventions of Spanish and Portuguese; in Afrikaans, which has systematically replaced Dutch etymological spellings like <concert> with phonemic spellings (<konsert>), at the same time drawing attention to differences, rather than similarities, which exist between the two languages.

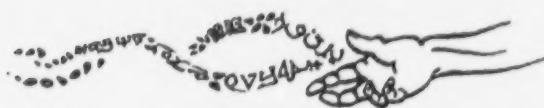
¹⁶ After several attempts to agree a common orthography for Malay and Indonesian, the respective governments finally reached an agreement in 1972. The Galician orthographic "wars" (see references in preceding footnote) provide a different kind of example, where differing sets of orthographic practices reflect the writers' attitudes towards the degree of "integration" Galician should have with Spanish on the one hand, or Portuguese on the other.

Orthographies, including that of Manx, are shaped by social and cultural factors in the context where the orthography develops: in particular, the nature of bilingualism among the literate part of the population; literacy practices within the community as a whole; and ideological beliefs concerning languages and their speakers, both inside and outside the community. In looking in more detail at the orthography of Manx we have been able to see the involvement and interplay of all three factors in its development. It seems likely that different factors are more or less important in different cases and at different stages; therefore, the outcome cannot be predicted in advance in a deterministic way. What we can say, however, is that in this case, social factors made it likely that the writing system of Manx would resemble that of English. This fact may have helped pave the way for the loss of Manx as a spoken language. At the same time, paradoxically, the very distinctiveness of Manx orthography may be what preserves Manx as an independent language in the face of pressure from its Gaelic neighbours.

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4

Literacy and Dialect Diversity

Four orthographies for Forest Nenets?

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Forest Nenets is a language spoken by approximately 1,500 people in north-western Siberia. It is closely related to Tundra Nenets, a language with 25,000 speakers. The extent of the differences between Forest Nenets and Tundra Nenets is similar to that between Dutch and English; in other words, they have a lot in common, but mutual intelligibility is low. Since the Forest Nenets are a much smaller community than the Tundra Nenets, and perhaps simply because there exists a single ethnonym, the Forest Nenets are not officially recognized but lumped together with the Tundra Nenets as the Nenets nationality. Accordingly, administrative authorities regard Forest Nenets as an aberrant dialect rather than a language. One of the consequences of this policy is that no literary language was created for Forest Nenets until the 1990s.

The Tundra Nenets literary language, itself a product of the 1930s, was never actively used in the Forest Nenets area. It seems that while the dogma of a unified Nenets language reigned officially, everybody must have understood that forcing the Tundra Nenets literary language upon Forest Nenets speakers would have been a hopeless task. Forest Nenets children, taken away to boarding schools like all children in native communities, therefore became literate in one language, Russian, while their Tundra Nenets peers learnt two literary languages, Russian and Tundra Nenets.

Here, as always, it is important to keep the concepts of 'literacy' versus 'literary language' apart. While no Forest Nenets literary language existed until very recently, it is clear that many literate Forest Nenets people have been using their own language in writing for decades. For this purpose, they obviously had to devise their own orthographies, which is, however, not a very difficult task, given the relatively straight-forward applicability of the Russian alphabet to Forest Nenets phonology. The Forest Nenets phonemes without a Russian counterpart must have been expressed by various makeshift solutions, but another literate speaker, even if not understanding all details, would have been able to restore the intended meaning from the context.

After the political changes in the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the apparent need to cling to counterfactual dogmas decreased significantly, and projects such as creating new literary languages were suddenly possible and even encouraged by the authorities. One of the emerging literary languages, and arguably the one that could serve the largest audience, was that of Forest Nenets.

The Forest Nenets literary language was created by a team consisting of a Tundra Nenets scholar and a Forest Nenets

student and was employed in two printed books, a primer from 1993 and a school dictionary from 1994; their orthography can be referred to as standard. Since then, literary activities in Forest Nenets have gone underground in the sense that only a couple of minor publications by three independent authors have appeared. Crucially, these native activists do not follow the standard orthography but present their own versions. Apart from a small number of factual dialect differences, an interesting pattern of influences from neighbouring languages becomes evident when one studies the details of the four resulting orthographies. The standard one is criticized for being modelled after Tundra Nenets, and there is some justification in this claim. On the other hand, one of the independent authors, also the loudest critic of the standard orthography, comes from a mixed Northern Selkup and Forest Nenets family, and her way of writing Forest Nenets exhibits features deriving from Northern Selkup phonology. The two other authors live on the periphery of the Forest Nenets country, and the dominant indigenous languages of their home areas, respectively Northern Khanty and Eastern Khanty, influence their orthographic choices.

Needless to say, the differences between the four orthographies are not that great, but the authors nevertheless oppose the standard orthography fiercely and propagate their own versions. The Forest Nenets literary language is therefore still very much in the developmental stage, and personal relationships among native activists have been damaged to some extent. In solving such conflicts, professional help would perhaps be needed from psychologists and sociologists rather than linguists. Indeed, one of the lessons that can be learnt from the course of these events is that more emphasis should be placed on multidisciplinary research on indigenous communities.

In other respects, orthographic controversies have hardly been detrimental to language maintenance among the Forest Nenets. Oral literature is still well preserved and highly valued by all generations, and while many younger people prefer Russian, the Forest Nenets language is much less endangered than one would expect given the small population and the presence of more prominent indigenous languages in the area. Sometimes it is tempting to think that it is exactly the lack of a literary standard that has allowed Forest Nenets to flourish freely, exhibiting full internal variation and relatively harmonious interaction with other languages.

For further information on the Forest Nenets language see <http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/fn.html>

When You Choose, Must You Lose?: Standard Orthography Versus Dialect Diversity

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Abstract

Many endangered language communities are today, for the first time in their histories, adopting a system for writing their language. More often than not, they are choosing alphabetic systems based on the Cyrillic or Roman alphabets. Alphabetic orthographies, however, may be problematic for dialectally diverse language communities. Because most alphabetic systems aim, at least at the outset, for a one-to-one correspondence between sounds (phonemes) and letters, the orthography can only accurately reflect one of the several dialects of a language.

Several approaches exist for accommodating dialect diversity within alphabetic writing systems. They include morpho-phonemic spellings, arbitrary spellings, consensus spellings and flexible spellings. Each of these approaches has advantages and disadvantages that make them appropriate for some language communities, but not for others.

Introduction

Many communities whose indigenous languages are endangered have recently turned to putting their languages down in writing for the first time as a means of preserving knowledge of the languages. In such cases, communities typically look to the orthography of neighboring or encroaching languages as models, or turn to an outside expert, such as a linguist, for advice. The result is more often than not the adoption of an alphabetic script, based on either the Roman or Cyrillic alphabet. (I include here orthographies based on the International Phonetic Alphabet and American phonemics, both of which are based on the Roman alphabet.) Numerous examples are provided by Native American communities which have, with few exceptions, adopted variants of the Roman alphabet, and by communities in Siberia, which have generally adopted variants of the Cyrillic alphabet.

The reasons for these choices are typically that the community is already familiar with the particular alphabet and its spelling conventions due to schooling in the encroaching language (English or Russian) and that technology (typewriters, computers) is readily available for the production of native language materials. Another often cited reason, in particular when outside experts are involved, is that an alphabetic orthography permits a more accurate representation of the pronunciation (i.e., phonemic system) of the language.

A Problem with Alphabets

Regardless of whether an alphabetic orthography is created by native speakers or introduced by an external consultant, it generally shows, at least at its inception, a nearly one-to-one relationship between the phonemes of the language and the letters of the alphabet. (Exceptions to this phenomenon are discussed below.) As a result, a problem arises when different dialects of a language have different phoneme inventories.

Typically, an alphabetic orthography can only accurately reflect one phoneme inventory and, thus, a choice must be made as to the dialect on which the orthography will be based. In the past such decisions were usually made by royal or dictatorial fiat and were not subject to debate. Such was the case, for example, when the dialect of the Loire valley – home to the royal castles – was chosen as the standard for French; when the dialect of Castille – native province of the king – was chosen as the standard for Spanish; and when the dialect of Bucharest – residence of the royal family – was chosen as the standard for Romanian. However, in more democratic societies the issue of dialect choice may be more controversial and the very act of choosing a standard may hasten language death by evoking a "my dialect / your dialect" confrontation among the remaining speakers. Such a situation occurred on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation in the late twentieth century.

In 1983 a meeting was held on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation in New York State to discuss, among other things, the development of a standard orthography. Prior to that time speakers had individually and idiosyncratically adapted English orthographic conventions to render Tuscarora words when they wished to write.

The meeting was attended by ten of the approximately fifty remaining fluent speakers of the language, as well as four linguists, namely, Floyd G. Lounsbury, Roy Wright, Joan Fickett and me. As the meeting progressed it became clear that the ten speakers represented nearly as many dialects, differing from one another primarily in pronunciation, as illustrated by the pronunciations of the word *urha'nakw'ú?y* in the big woods shown in table 1. (Capital letter represent voiceless resonants and consonants preceded by an apostrophe represent preglot-

Speaker	Pronunciation
Louise Henry	[uRha'na'gɔW'úy?]
Amelia Williams	[uRha'na'giW'úY]
Elton Greene	[uRha'nagɔ'úY]
Dorothy Crouse	[ushanagi'úY]
Marjory Printup	[usha'na'gɔ'úY]
Paul Bissell	[oshanagi'ú?]

Table 1: Tuscarora Dialects

talized stops.) As a result of this variation and the insistence on using a roman orthography, no consensus could be reached on the "correct" spelling of individual words and the effort to adopt a standard orthography was abandoned, not to be taken up again for twenty years.

Some Tried Solutions

Examination of the spelling practices of languages around the world with alphabetic orthographies reveals that several approaches exist for preserving dialect diversity. They may be classified into four types: 1) morphophonemic spelling, 2) arbitrary spelling, 3) consensus spelling, and 4) flexible spelling. As discussed below, some of these approaches have evolved spontaneously during the historical development of particular languages, while others have been the result of conscious decision-making by speakers.

Morphophonemic spelling

One approach to preserving dialect diversity is to employ an orthography that represents the abstract (morphophonemic) form of words that is common to all dialects. Such systems typically do not accurately reflect the pronunciation of any one dialect.

Morphophonemic spelling systems have occasionally arisen spontaneously over time when older spellings were retained after sound changes had occurred. Two well-known examples of this phenomenon are the spelling systems of English and Irish. As discussed in greater detail elsewhere (e.g., Chomsky & Halle, 1968), English retained the spelling of vowels even after the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) significantly altered the pronunciation of vowels in stressed syllables. As a result, there is a single spelling for roots that have alternate pronunciations in composition. Furthermore, as shown in table 2, it makes

Dialect	Pronunciation	
	invitation	invite
Australia	[invítáyʃən]	[inváyʃt]
Canada	[invítáyʃən]	[inváyʃt]
England (R.P.)	[invítáyʃən]	[inváyʃt]
US Northeast	[invítáyʃən]	[inváyʃ?]
US South	[invítáyʃən]	[invá:ət]

Table 2: English Dialectal Pronunciations

no difference what the contemporary outcome of GVS in a particular dialect is, the spelling remains the same.

Similarly, as illustrated by Ó Siadhail (1989), the Irish spelling system is morphophonemic in much the same way as English. As shown in table 3, Irish roots are spelled the same, even when – due to historic sound changes – the root is pronounced differently in different inflected forms. As in English, it makes no difference what the modern dialectal reflexes of those changes are.

Dialect	Pronunciation	
	saor <i>free</i>	saoré <i>holiday</i>
Connacht	[sɪr]	[sɪr'ə]
Rannafast	[swɪr]	[sɪr'ə]
Munster	[se:r]	[sɪr'ə]

Table 3: Irish Dialectal Pronunciations

So useful have the morphophonemic spelling systems of English and Irish proven in preserving communication across dialects without elevating any one dialect as the standard that, despite numerous attempts at spelling reforms, the orthographies of these languages have undergone only minor, cosmetic changes.

It is not at all clear, however, how practical a solution a morphophonemic spelling is for a language community that is only now adopting an orthography. In the case of both English and Irish, the orthography began as an essentially phonemic system, and only evolved into a morphophonemic representation over time.

Everyone agrees that these spelling systems are difficult to learn, largely for the same reason that they are useful for preserving dialect diversity, i.e., the lack of direct correspondence between sound and spelling. The ease or difficulty of introducing a morphophonemic system for an endangered language would depend to a significant degree on just how greatly the pronunciations in the various dialects of the language differ from one another and, thus, how abstract (indirect) the relationship between spellings and pronunciations would need to be.

Arbitrary spelling

The spelling system of English is good for English because, as noted above, it represents the morphophonemic form of words. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many of the indigenous languages of North America adopted writing systems based on English spelling conventions, either on their own or as the result of efforts by missionaries. On the Tuscarora Indian Reservation, for example, where there was no standard orthography for the language until quite recently, when the need to write a word in Tuscarora arose, each speaker would exploit his or her knowledge of English orthography to render as closely as possible Tuscarora pronunciation.

However, as noted earlier, there were significant differences among speakers in the pronunciation of individual words. Furthermore, the Tuscarora language employs many sounds for which English has no orthographic convention (e.g., voiceless liquids, glides and nasals; preglottalized stops; glottal stop; centralized nasal vowels). In addition, because English spelling is morphophonemic rather than phonemic, it often offers several different options for the representation of a particular sound. The result of these factors was that, although all of the Tuscarora speakers were using the orthographic conventions of English, there was little consistency among speakers in the spelling of individual words. This is illustrated in table 4 by the spelling for the Tuscarora word $\text{eyurh}\acute{\text{e}}\text{'}\text{e}$ ([$\text{iyuRh}\acute{\text{e}}\text{'}\text{i}$] ~ [$\text{iyush}\acute{\text{e}}\text{'}\text{i}$]) *tomorrow* that results from the orthographic practices employed by the Tuscarora authors cited. (In adapting English orthography to the Tuscarora language, speakers typically followed the widespread Iroquoian habit of using hyphens to divide words into syllables.)

Speaker	Spelling
David Cusick (1828)	eyorheen
Elton Greene (1969)	Eh'eh-you't-heh'Eh
Elias Johnson (1881)	eh-yol-heh-eh
Marjory Printup (1988)	ea-yoos-hea'-ea
Ted Williams (1976)	eh-yous-eh-t-e

Table 4: Traditional Spellings of Tuscarora *tomorrow*

Due to the dialect differences among speakers, as well as other socio-political considerations, no one would accept and use the orthography of another. However, because of her twenty-three-year tenure on the reservation as Tuscarora language teacher for the elementary school and the adult education program, the orthography used by Marjory Printup did gain some currency among speakers of Tuscarora as a second language. Had her orthography been adopted as the standard, the sheer arbitrariness of the orthographic representation of sounds that resulted from the poor match between English and Tuscarora phonemics and phonetics might well have served to preserve the dialect diversity in the language. However, opposition by other fluent speakers who insisted on using their own, equally arbitrary spellings prevented Printup's orthography from being adopted by the nation as THE standard.

Consensus spelling

Another approach to dealing with dialect variation while adopting an alphabetic orthography is for the speakers of the various dialects to negotiate with one another over which dialectal features will be represented by the orthography and which will not. Well-known instances of this phenomenon are the committee discussions that led to the orthographies adopted for Tagalog, modern Czech, and Haitian Creole. This approach is also illustrated by the recent decisions made by the Tuscarora Language Committee (Rudes & Patterson, 1999).

Two major dialects of Tuscarora were spoken at the end of the twentieth century. Ignoring some minor differences within these two dialects such as those shown in table 1, the phoneme inventories of the two dialects were the same except that one, the eastern dialect spoken on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation, made a distinction between two sibilant fricatives where the other, the western dialect formerly spoken on the Six Nations Reserve, had only one.

The Tuscarora Language Committee chose to base the standard orthography for the language on the eastern dialect that possessed the contrast, and had more speakers at the time, and simply explain that the graphs <θ> and <ɬ> are both pronounced [s] in the western dialect. Clearly, the committee was influenced by the larger number of speakers of the eastern dialect and the existence of published texts in the eastern dialect, but not the western dialect (Rudes & Crouse, 1987). However, the fact that the orthography was the result of negotiations is reflected in other dialect concessions, such as writing syllable-final /t/ and /w/ as <ɬ> and <θ>, respectively, as they are pronounced in some dialects, as compared to other dialects which have voiceless [R] and [W] in this position.

Typically, the consensus approach is only viable where there are few dialects and/or few differences in pronunciation among dialects. Where there are many dialects or many differences in pronunciation among dialects, it may be impossible to get everyone to agree on spellings. For example, consensus spellings would be next to impossible for a language such as English, with its many dialects, or Italian, with its highly divergent dialects.

Flexible spelling

A fourth way to preserve dialect diversity in the face of an alphabetic orthography is to be flexible about the spelling in those cases where dialects differ. This approach is illustrated by the choices made by the Mohawk Language Standardisation Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from four Mohawk communities in Canada: the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, the Mohawk Council of Akwesáhsne, the Wahta Mohawk First Nation, and the Mohawk community at the Six Nations of the Grand River. In addition to some differences in vocabulary, the pronunciation of Mohawk differs from one community to the next, as shown in table 5. (Examples are adapted from Bonvillain, 1984.)

Community	Pronunciation	
	<i>muskra</i>	<i>scdt</i>
Akwesáhsne	anó:gyʌ	gyohyó:jis
Kahnawake	anó:jʌ	johyó:jis
Oka	anó:gyʌ	dyohyó:jis

Table 5: Mohawk Dialects

At a conference funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education (recently renamed the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities), the committee met and deliberated on the orthography to use in representing the Mohawk language (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1997). At the conclusion of the conference the committee decided that, given the history of literacy in each community and the existence of extensive written materials in several of the dialects, each community would retain its established orthography and that a dictionary would be prepared that would present side-by-side the different communities' spellings of the same words.

The flexible approach, however, is not for everyone. The fact that this approach was acceptable to the four Mohawk communities was almost certainly due to the fact they are each semi-autonomous entities with their own tribal governments. As a result, the Mohawk decision to use different orthographies to represent the same language is roughly parallel to the tacit agreement between the sovereign states of the Netherlands and Belgium to use different orthographies for the Dutch (Flemish) language, between Great Britain and the United States to use different orthographies for English, and between Romania and Moldova to use different orthographies for Romanian.

Conclusion

Recognizing and accommodating dialect diversity within an alphabetic orthography may be important for both communicative and social reasons and, as the examples discussed above illustrate, it is entirely possible. Of the four approaches examined in this presentation, morphophonemic orthographies appear to be the most enduring over time and evolve naturally within language communities. However, there is no evidence at present to indicate that such an orthography would be acceptable to speech communities whose languages are endangered.

Arbitrary spellings are spontaneous creations of individual speakers. While they achieve the goal of preserving dialectal features, the typically great variation between speakers in the representation of the same sounds often impedes rather than facilitates literacy.

A number of speech communities have found that an effective way to give fair treatment to the dialect diversity within the community is to develop an orthography by consensus among representatives of the various dialects. This approach, however, requires a high degree of collaboration and compromise among speakers of the various dialects, and may not work in communities where there is either a high degree of dialect diversity or entrenched factionalization.

Finally, the success of flexible orthographies, which allow each dialect to represent its own phonological peculiarities, appears to be limited to speech communities in

which the major dialect divisions coincide with boundaries between autonomous political entities. There is no evidence that this approach would be acceptable within a dialectally diverse community that either constituted a single political entity or lacked sovereignty entirely.

Two main lessons may be drawn from the survey of alphabetic orthographies presented here. First, as noted earlier, there are approaches available for preserving dialect diversity or at least giving equitable treatment to different dialects within an alphabetic writing system. Second, the acceptability and endurance of a such an orthography has as much to do with socio-political factors as it does with the fidelity with which dialectal differences are represented.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Lloyd Anderson for discussion of morphophonemic spelling systems.

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Developing a Standard Orthography for an Oral Language: the Innu (Montagnais) Experiment

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Abstract

According to several researchers specializing in minority languages, languages which have no written form or no standardized orthography run a greater risk of dying out in the long term than languages which have a well established tradition of literacy. The transition to written form, however, although perceived to be urgently needed, is difficult to implement. This is especially so for minority languages which have several dialects, where the adoption of a standardized orthography often leads to controversy.

In this paper, we will outline the process of orthographic standardization of the oral language of the Innu (also called Montagnais), an Aboriginal language of the Algonquian family, spoken by approximately 8000 speakers in Quebec and Labrador (Canada).

The process of orthographic standardization of the Innu language has been long and difficult, but it has given interesting results, in spite of all obstacles. We will present here some of the difficulties encountered as well as a few of the solutions which were agreed upon.

Introduction

The development of the written form for oral languages has given rise to much debate for many years. For example, many specialists in minority and endangered languages consider that unwritten languages are at a higher risk of disappearing, in the mid to long term, than those which have developed a standard spelling system¹; they believe, in fact, that the preservation and development of minority oral tradition languages in modern technological society depends on the appropriation, by the speakers of these languages, of a literacy adapted to their needs. For other specialists of oral tradition languages, literacy does not guarantee their survival and may even endanger their natural transmission².

We do not intend to repeat this debate here, because we believe there is no one single answer to this question. In fact, minority language communities with an oral tradition are not all identical, even if they do present some similarities. Thus, Native American cultures, which may present many common characteristics, nevertheless differ

in a number of aspects for geographic, historical, social, cultural, political and environmental reasons.

In what follows, we will outline the experience of orthographic standardization by the Innu³. The history of the development of a standard writing system for a minority linguistic community with an oral tradition is most likely representative of many situations experienced elsewhere by other aboriginal communities and nations. The process of standardizing the Innu orthography has been long and arduous, taking 25 years before a consensus satisfactory to all the communities was arrived at. An officially recognized common spelling system for the Innu language has existed since 1997.

For the Innu, the principal obstacle to standardization came primarily from dialectal diversity; this language has two main dialects, and some sub-dialects, which present further morphological differences as much as phonological and lexical ones. There was no question of the speakers adopting any one of the dialects as the spelling norm.

Linguistic, Geographic and Demographic Situation

Innu is an Amerindian language spoken in Quebec and Labrador (Canada); it is part of the Algonquian family and it is linguistically very close to the (East) Cree of Quebec and the Naskapi⁴.

The Innu live in ten isolated villages, in a remote northern region of Quebec and Labrador. Around 8000 people use Innu as a mother tongue and an every-day language. The rate of retention of the language varies from one community to the next: extinct in one, spoken by one third of the population in another, majority language of nearly 75% at Uashat-Maliotenam, and 95% elsewhere. The Innu language, therefore, is still very vigorous in the majority of communities. Nevertheless, the pressures from the dominant language are very strong. In fact, virtually all Innu are bilingual today, with French as the second language in the nine Quebec communities and

¹ See, in Grenoble & Whaley (1998: 34), Wurm (1991: 7), Mackey (1983: 9) and Spolsky & Holm (1978: 59).

² Numerous authors have written on this topic. Bielenberg (1999) discusses this issue in presenting the situation experienced by four Native communities; his article points out certain negative aspects of writing for a number of Native languages.

³ The Innu are called Montagnais by French speakers. They call themselves Innu and it is this term they prefer when referring to them.

⁴ Some authors consider that Innu is a dialect of the Cree continuum, as are Naskapi and Eastern Cree. It must be noted that if these languages are indeed closely related, they are not mutually comprehensible. And for historical and political reasons, the Innu consider themselves different from the Crees and the Naskapis.

English in the Labrador community (and partly in the Pakuashipi community). Preschool children are generally monolingual in Innu, but their vocabulary is much influenced by French and they do a lot of code-switching.

Until the early 50s, the Innu were nomads, making their living from hunting, fishing and trapping. They went from place to place in small groups over long distances, following the main rivers of the north coast of the St. Lawrence, and met during the summer at the mouths of these rivers for salmon fishing, fur trade and Catholic missions. The 50s are critical since schooling becomes obligatory, in French for the Quebec communities and in English for the one from Labrador. This obligatory schooling brought about the rapid sedentarization for most of the Innu who settled in shoreline villages, where they still live today. We can consider that the nomadic lifestyle and the relatively recent scarification of the Innu (as compared to other Native people of Canada and United States) as well as the isolation of most of their villages has favored the maintenance of their language.

Writing in Innu

Why write in Innu?

It does not seem that the importance of being able to write in their language was ever a subject of debate among the Innu. In fact, writing, first developed by the missionaries, has existed, albeit marginally, since the 18th century, as Drapeau (1985b) has shown.

In the 19th century, the Innu who were in contact with missionaries had developed writing habits and a tradition of transmission, within the family, of reading or writing skills. The teaching of literacy was carried out with the primary aim of reading religious texts; some individuals used writing only for short messages or a personal journal, but no one used writing intensively. With the introduction of obligatory education in the dominant language, people ceased, little by little, to write in Innu.

The practical orthographies which we are speaking of showed a great deal of variation, changing according to generation, dialect and even individual and family. As Drapeau (1985b) points out, they followed the rules of oral, more than written, language. No one felt compelled to make the writing system systematic or to use a common spelling system.

When the Innu language was first taught in the schools, in the early 70s, no one questioned the place of reading and writing in the language: for everyone it was simply self-evident. For many, reading and writing was an integral part of schooling and the fact of not being able to read and write a language made the language less prestigious. The development of literacy skills was therefore seen as a tool for the promotion of the language itself.

How to write?

When schooling became obligatory for the Innu, the mother tongue, not surprisingly, had no place in educational programs, when it was not clearly banned (as

in the case of those who attended boarding schools). Then, in the 1970s, following the 1972 publication of the document *Indian Control of Indian Education* by the National Indian Brotherhood, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs set in motion the "Project for the Amerindianization of the Aboriginal Schools" which had as specific goal, among others, to establish the teaching of Amerindian languages in the schools.

The introduction of the Innu language in the school posed the problem of a spelling norm, if reading and writing in this language were to be taught. Specialists unanimously supported the idea of establishing an orthography which could be used by all speakers, whatever their dialect. But how was this norm to be established?

The question of spelling standardization, for a linguistic community with an oral tradition and which is interested in writing, is a particularly sensitive topic which gives rise to a great deal of emotion, as Hinton (1994: 219), speaking of the Native languages of California, points out:

Choosing a writing system has been controversial for many Native communities, leading to high emotions and intense disagreements. Like language itself, a writing system becomes a symbolic representation of a community and its values. But it cannot be forgotten that the heart and soul of California languages are in their speaking. Writing is at best a crude imitation.

The difficulty of adopting a standard spelling is much greater for minority languages which have many dialects. In a democratic society, there is no longer a possibility of imposing one of the dialects as a standard, either spoken or written, as was often done in the past. Instead, a consensus must be reached among all speakers involved. For aboriginal languages elsewhere, experience shows that an imposed standard has little chance of success.

Thus, there was no question of the Innu speakers adopting anyone of the dialects as a spelling norm.

History of the Standardization

The influence of the missionaries.

As mentioned above, the first texts in Innu were written by French missionaries who needed to learn the language of the people they hoped to convert. With this goal in mind, they developed a writing system using the roman alphabet. They produced dictionaries⁵, grammars and wrote religious texts (prayer and psalm books, some of which are still in use today). This first writing system developed for Innu would influence the modern spelling of the language. In fact, many of the graphemes found in the works produced by missionaries have been retained in the present-day writing system. This influence of missionary texts explains, for example, the absence of the letter *w* in Innu: this letter did not exist in the French of the time and was therefore not used by the missionaries, who used the vowel *u* for both the vowel and the semi-vowel. From the

⁵ The manuscripts for 17th century dictionaries have been re-edited: Fabvre (1970), Silvy (1974) et Laure (1988).

beginning of the process of spelling standardization, the Innu vigorously rejected the use of the *w*, which is widely used in related languages.

Up until the introduction of the Innu language in the schools in the early 70s, the missionaries were the main specialists in writing in Innu; they were the first "linguists". For them, however, the standardization of the orthographic system was not a priority. For a long period of time, the religious texts produced were written in the dialect of Betsiamites, this being their permanent place of residence. Later, with the development of permanent villages, the missionaries had a tendency to develop their own individual writing systems, without worrying about what was being done elsewhere.

The birth of standardization

Work on standardizing Innu orthography began seriously in 1974, when the language was first taught in the schools, under the impetus of the "Amerindianization Project" of the Ministry for Indian and Northern Affairs. Indeed, how was reading and writing to be taught without first having established a spelling system? In the context of the "Amerindianization Project", a team of specialists teachers started to work on the problem, as recounted by Mailhot:

Through the Amerindianization of the Schools Project, Montagnais orthographic reform has progressed through several stages since 1974: comparative description of the different local and regional dialect variants, analysis of historic and present orthographic practices, and the preparation of a proposed standard orthography worked out in collaboration with student teachers. During the next stage, most of the communities were visited and the main points of the reform tested on unilingual adults for acceptability. (1985: 23)

In 1977, a first Innu-French lexicon (Mailhot & Lescop) was published. The orthographic system that was used, based on the roman alphabet, was not derived from any single dialect but took account of all the dialects as well as historical data, and indeed, of the traditions begun by the missionaries.

Nevertheless, in spite of this rigorous work, based on consultations with and the implication of speakers from all the Innu communities, this first effort to standardize the spelling system failed; speakers were not yet ready to abandon, in writing, the system of marks specific to their particular dialect and they categorically rejected a system which did not closely match their pronunciation. As the previous quote from Hinton shows, writing, even for a society with an oral tradition, can be a marker of identity. In fact,

Each community, has a death grip on its particular features, and therefore, sees in *its* writing the reflection of its identity and, in the idea of uniformity a strategy for undermining *its* accent (Drapeau, 1985b: p. 98, our translation)

It turned out to be much more difficult than had been thought to convince Innu speakers of the necessity of implementing a system of writing which would not limit

the dissemination of documents produced to a community of only a few hundred people, as had always been the case. But, if the proposal for uniformity did not have the hoped-for results, it did constitute a first stage which would have repercussions in the longer term.

During the following decade, the standardization of an orthography and, consequently, the teaching of writing in Innu made little progress, due to lack of pedagogical material and reference works. In the absence of a spelling norm, material produced in one location could not be used elsewhere, unless adapted to the local dialect. The scarcity of human and material resources was strongly linked to the fact that each community had to recreate in some way what had been done elsewhere. Drapeau, a linguist who has worked with the Innu of Betsiamites for many years, has this to say:

The fact that there was no open agreement on this subject led to considerable confusion and almost total paralysis in the area of curriculum material development. Knowing that their spelling system was highly inconsistent, teachers were discouraged at the thought of producing reading materials since they knew that one day, perhaps in the near future, they would have to change most of it. The disparity of spelling habits among the teachers naturally caused a great deal of confusion among the pupils, who came to believe that Montagnais classes were futile or at least not serious. Indeed, one must remember that any students, taught to read and write in a European language with a rigorous orthography, develop high expectations about the nature of the writing system, whether it is their own language or a second language. Continuous groping and frequent disparities in spelling habits on the part of the teachers are readily noticed by students and entail considerable disillusionment. (1985a: 27)

In such a situation, it is easy to understand that, in spite of the efforts of Innu teachers, the use of the Innu language within the school had not made much progress.

Continuing the process

In 1981, Betsiamites took control of its local school and, the following year, created a committee "whose task was to agree once and for all on a writing system and to set up a coherent program for teaching Montagnais [as a subject] as a first language from kindergarten to the eleventh grade" (Drapeau, 1992: 197, our translation). In less than a year, the committee arrived at a consensus on the orthography system to be used in Betsiamites.

This system was fairly conservative, closely resembling the one which had been rejected previously; even though the Betsiamites dialect is the least conservative of all, the committee adopted a conservative spelling norm, reflecting the type of language spoken 100 to 150 years earlier, believing that this system could be easily adopted by the other communities. In the eyes of the Innu, the old language is often seen as a purer, and thus more prestigious, form. It was therefore easier to have such a spelling system accepted, even if it was further removed from the spoken form and required a longer period of training.

The Betsiamites initiative was the beginning of a serious effort which would eventually lead to standardization. The rest of the process took place in stages. One of the problems that seems to have blocked or slowed down the adoption of a single spelling norm is the absence of an authority (or an organization) with a mandate to further its development and dissemination, this being due to a large number of politically autonomous communities and a diversity of dialects, each Innu community being managed locally by a Band Council and schools being also administrated locally.

The intervention of ICEM

Towards the mid 1980s, an important step forward was taken with the arrival of a new partner which took over leadership in the standardization of the spelling system, l'*Institut culturel et éducatif montagnais* (ICEM)⁶. This cultural and educational organization, which worked with most of the Innu communities, was given as mandate, in the fall of 1985, to promote the standardization of the orthography, to identify and make available human and material resources by only funding future publications which followed the spelling norms, wherever such a norm existed. The arrival of the Institute responded to the wishes of those who deplored the absence of leadership and clear policies on this question.

Drapeau (1992) describes how the work was carried out under the patronage of the Institute :

First, Lynn Drapeau and José Mailhot analyzed recent Montagnais language publications from all the communities with the aim of establishing a first set of criteria. Variation was found on many points, some reflecting dialectal differences while others being a matter of pure convention. Each point of variation was noted, analyzed linguistically and put in a working document, which was then discussed during three workshops of 3 days each from March 1986 to February 1989. These workshops brought together teachers and translators from all the communities. Because of the marked differences which separated the western dialects (Betsiamites, Sept-Iles and Schefferville) from those of the Lower North Shore, it was not possible to eliminate these spelling differences. Nevertheless the orthography was largely standardized and the rest of the process could be left to time. The decisions made in the workshops were recorded in a practical guide for teachers and editors of Montagnais texts. (1992: 197, our translation)

The means put in place by ICEM have given interesting results: a first spelling guide was produced (Drapeau & Mailhot, 1989), followed by the publication of a Montagnais-French dictionary (Drapeau, 1991), which serves as a reference manual for the spelling of vocabulary. It must be noted that a rigorous process was followed in the editing of this dictionary, in order to determine the correct spelling; to this end, many dictionaries were consulted, including those from the 17th century, and this allowed the historical forms of the roots to be used in disputed cases.

Since the workshops organized by the Institute did not lead to the settling of all dialect variations, work had to be continued. In 1990, the Kaianuet Committee was created by ICEM, bringing together representatives of each community, particularly Innu language teachers. This Committee looks after the promotion and the development of the Innu language. Decisions pertaining to standardization of the spelling are now part of its mandate.

It is important to understand that the establishment of an orthographic system is a complex process which should be directed by people who have a good knowledge of the language, of its grammatical structures and its rules. Most members of the Kaianuet committee have had many years of experience in teaching, which has convinced them of the necessity of a good spelling system. As their theoretical knowledge of the language is less solid, they can consult specialists when they feel the need.

The committee has played an important role in the later process of standardization. The fact that the committee is permanent has, since its establishment, guaranteed continuity.

In 1997, another series of workshops on spelling were finally organized at Sept-Iles, gathering Kaianuet Committee members and other people involved in Innu language promotion. The results obtained from the workshops were very positive, since a consensus was reached which allowed the establishment of principles and rules for a common writing system that could be used by all Innu. The few remaining minor points of variation are not an obstacle to standardizing the texts. In any case, as José Mailhot stated in the document which outlines the synthesis of the 1997 workshops: "Let us remember that the standardization of the orthography of the Innu language is a process to be continued into future years". (1997: 2, our translation)

Among the many recommendations from the workshops is the following: "If they are aimed at the Innu public, any new books which will be published by ICEM, as well as older ones which will be re-edited, should — with the permission of the author — conform to Innu spelling". (Mailhot, 1997: 8, our translation)

A reference grammar of the Innu language is also in the process of being published; this work will be useful for establishing grammatical spelling rules. Until the grammar is published, a guide to verb conjugations has been produced from the material to be included in the grammar.

The Principles of Innu Orthography

The process of standardizing Innu orthography has taken 25 years. This clearly shows how difficult it has been to arrive at a consensus. And this consensus would not have been possible without the involvement of the speakers themselves, specifically that of the language teachers from each of the communities. In fact, linguists and Innu speakers of each community worked closely together in order to establish basic principles and precise criteria (phonological, morphological, historical, etc.) so as to help resolve disputed cases.

⁶ The "Montagnais Institute for Culture and Education"

The following basic principles, which were decided on during the course of different spelling workshops, are presented in the document titled *Towards a common spelling system for the Innu language* (Mailhot, 1997: 6, our translation):

1. Innu orthography will be based on a set of rules which will be called "the rules of written Innu".
2. The local features of the spoken language will not be represented in the written system.
3. For spelling of vocabulary, the *Dictionnaire montagnais-français* by L. Drapeau will serve as a reference (but with systematic changes and certain corrections).
4. For the spelling of grammatical forms, the eastern dialect will be used as a reference (but the verb conjugations and other paradigms will be regularized).
5. Variations in vocabulary which exist at the local or regional level will be treated as synonyms.
6. The particular phrasing and style of each author will be respected.

Finally, the new Innu spelling norm does not correspond to any particular dialect, but is in some way, a fusion of the characteristics of two current dialects. The choice of spelling rules was made in a rigorous fashion, according to the principles which we have just outlined. Cases which were difficult to resolve were carefully examined and the resulting solutions accepted by all workshop participants, who represent the communities. The solutions which were adopted in the course of the 1997 workshops were those which provoked the most resistance in the beginning or which had not been previously studied (for example, verb endings).

It must be understood that if the provision of a uniform spelling has advantages, it also has disadvantages, for otherwise it would not have taken so long to arrive at a writing system accepted by everyone. For example, the Innu orthography for lexical items is more difficult for eastern speakers to apply, while for those from the west, the orthography of grammatical forms require greater effort. Thus, speakers of all dialects or sub-dialects must compromise in one way or another.

Mailhot (1997: 7, our translation) listed the main points of disadvantage for spelling reform:

- reform requires the adoption of a number of changes in the existing spelling of all users;
- in all dialects, the written language will be very far from the spoken language (so that no one will be able to count on his or her pronunciation as a guide to spelling);
- training in the written system will be longer and more difficult than it is now; the proposed reform does not take account of the language of Mashteuiatsh⁷;

⁷ The community of Mashteuiatsh (Lac St-Jean) withdrew at a certain point in the standardization process because its situation is different. In this village, the Innu language is not spoken by more than one third of the population and the average age of speakers is rather high. This language should therefore be taught as a second language. The choice of a

- all the words in the Innu language are not in the dictionary; certain minor points still have no solution.

What Should Be Done in the Future?

The fact of having adopted a single orthographic standard for the Innu language does not mean that the development of writing in Innu is finished, far from it. The Innu must now see to the promotion of this norm, to the training of Innu writers and to the development of written material.

Promotion and training

The Innu orthographic standard has been adopted very recently and further work is needed to spread its use to all speakers of this language, and this is a long way from happening.

At first, the focus should be on the training of different groups who will use it: teachers, editors, translators, etc. These groups are generally in favour of spelling reform because they understand the need, but without training they encounter difficulties in applying the rules.

At the moment, too few Innu have mastered the common orthography sufficiently. Feeling ill at ease with this new norm, they are often hesitant to adopt it. An important job of creating awareness needs to be carried out for the whole population, including the promotion of the spelling norm. We should not be overly optimistic, as it is not easy to make people understand the results of standardization when they have not followed all the steps in the process.

Indeed, there are still Innu resisting any kind of orthographic standard because they do not grasp the importance of having such a standard; they are afraid that they will have to change the way they speak, that they will be forced to adopt a dialect other than their own. Indeed, we must take account of the fact that for many speakers of a language with an oral tradition, the difference between oral and written language is not always clear.

At no time during the process of standardization was there any question of a spoken standard. In all training given to future teachers of the Innu language there was insistence on the importance of respecting, in speech, the student's dialect, as is the case elsewhere, in French or in English, where speakers keep their accent, even when the spelling is standardized. The Kaianuet Committee has always insisted on the distinction between speech and writing:

[...] it was made clear that the new system of writing does not constitute a new linguistic standard to which one must conform in speaking. On the contrary, we insist that readers actually pronounce the word in their own vernacular dialect. Every effort is made in this respect so that students learn to read with no trace of a "foreign" accent. (Drapeau, 1985a: 31)

more abstract spelling system, that is, one which does not match the pronunciation very closely, poses certain problems for this particular dialect.

It is necessary to target young people in particular. As experience has shown, right from the beginning of the orthographic standardization process, children have much less difficulty than adults in mastering a spelling system which does not wholly correspond to pronunciation. In fact, they have no prejudices, have not acquired spelling habits, as have adults, and are not attached to any particular tradition, such as the one inherited from the missionaries. Objectively, the Innu standard orthography is not more abstract or complex than that of French or English. It is the lack of teaching material and written documents which makes the difference, as much as the scarcity of well-trained teaching personnel for written Innu. If the teaching of the Innu language is given more place in the school curriculum, then the spread of the common spelling system can move forward.

In future years the focus will be placed on literate children and adults, on language specialists and on the production of pedagogical and reference material.

Reference material and other written material

The diffusion of an orthographic system cannot be made efficiently without reference material such as dictionaries and grammars. We have mentioned above the *Dictionnaire montagnais-français* which serves as reference for vocabulary spelling. This dictionary having been originally specifically conceived for the Betsiamites dialect, corrections and additions are therefore necessary; a possible solution would be to transfer the dictionary to CD-ROM with the necessary adjustments. A grammar is in preparation, some parts of which are already in circulation as a working document, with a guide to verb conjugations (Baraby, 1999).

New pedagogical material for the teaching of Innu must also be developed. Now that a single orthography has been developed, it is possible to elaborate material which can be used in all the schools, which was not the case previously, each teacher having to either create his or her own material or having to adapt that which had been developed elsewhere. Since September 1999, a team of teachers and language specialists has been working on developing a new curriculum and new teaching material for the teaching of the Innu language. This new curriculum closely follows the norms established by the recently renovated programs of the Ministry of Education of the Government of Quebec.

It is quite important that the pedagogical material for Innu be as well conceived and as attractive as are the material used for other academic subjects, so as to maintain the interest and motivation for learning the language on the part of the students, and so as to convince school administrators to give to the teaching of Innu the rightful place it deserves in the general curriculum. The maintenance of the minority language does not solely rely on the School, but the School does play a very important role.

The production of books is another important tool in the promotion of literacy in the Innu language: why learn how to read and write in one's language if there is nothing to read or write about? ICEM, which has played an

important role in the process of standardizing the orthography, is now encouraging the publication of works of all kinds in Innu. These works must however respect recently adopted orthographic norms.

Conclusion

Does the preservation and development of minority oral tradition languages in modern technological society depend on the appropriation, by the speakers of these languages, of a literacy adapted to their needs? There are no obvious or easy answers to this question. That which seems to be a good solution for a given language community is not necessarily optimal elsewhere.

As for the Innu, they early on determined that developing the written form of their language was important for its survival and development. However, the road to this development has not been easy. It has required enormous amounts of patience and determination on the part of the major actors involved in the process of developing a written norm. In some locations, people who were present at the beginning of the process continue to work in the same direction, as teachers, translators, program coordinators, members of the Kaianuet Committee, etc. It is now necessary to insure a "changing of the guard" and begin the training of younger folk on whose shoulders will lie the responsibility of continuing the process.

The existence of a spelling standard does not guarantee the survival of a minority language with an oral tradition, but it is an important tool in the development of writing, which in turn may help the maintenance of the language. Schools also have an important role to play in the development of the language. However, the community itself is certainly the main actor in the survival of a language since the handing down of a language is first and foremost a family matter and therefore a community matter.

In this paper, we have tried to share an experience of spelling standardization which has given interesting results, in spite of all the obstacles encountered. Perhaps this experience will encourage those who are engaged in a similar process to persevere.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following persons for their help in editing the English version of this paper.

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Literacy Ideologies and the Future of Gascon

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Abstract

Literacy is best seen as a set of practices resulting from an interaction between writing technologies and literacy ideologies. In evaluating the potential strengths and weaknesses of a set of literacy practices, ideological issues are, if anything, more important than technical ones. Based on an examination of the case of Gascon, one can distinguish at least three aspects of literacy ideologies that are important to language maintenance: *depth*: the extent and nature of social groups sharing positive literacy ideologies; *scope*: the set of literacy events that are perceived as normal and acceptable in the language; *range*: the power that a literacy holds as a result of its validation by external groups. In the case of Gascon, it seems clear that those seeking to reverse language shift have focused most intently on scope. However, it turns out that they may have more room to innovate and strengthen the overall status of the language by focusing on range. The reasons are complex and have to do with the dynamism of nearby Catalunya and with the use of Internet technologies.

Introduction

French bargain hunters who live in the Pyrenean regions have long made little weekend excursions into the Aran Valley of Spain in search of cheap alcohol, clothing, and canned vegetables. As they approach the border, there is no real geographical sense of change. The old buildings that formerly housed police and customs offices seem to appear almost randomly. However, the narrow, winding French road does give way to a broad, modern Spanish highway, and, in recent years, many of these day trippers have slowed down in astonishment at the huge billboard that welcomes them. The sign is posted in Spanish, Catalan, and some third language that most of these people have never seen written: "Hilat de carretèrers der Estat." Those who are not too young sometimes realize with stupefaction that this sign is written in what they might call "patois" and what linguists would name "Gascon." The first public use of written Gascon that many speakers encounter is the billboard at the Spanish border.

Pyrenean Gascon

The triangle of southwestern France formed by the Pyrenean summits on the south, the Atlantic on the west, and the Garonne River running northwest from the mountains to the Ocean via Toulouse and Bordeaux, has always been a peculiar part of Europe. In Roman times, it was known as Aquitania, and Caesar noted its geographical and eth-

nic distinctiveness in the opening lines of his *Gallie Wars*. The inhabitants of this region spoke a language at that time that was the ancestor of modern Basque. As they became Romanized, most of them, they developed a distinctly odd form of Latin. Gregory of Tours, in the 6th century, had to deal with a fake holy man from this area. He notes that "it was not easy to follow what he was trying to say" (1974:485). This eccentric Latin dialect is what eventually became Gascon (the word shares its origins with the word *Basque*). In the medieval golden age of southern France, the *Leys d'Amors*, a summing up of troubadour poetics, referred, perhaps exaggeratedly, to Gascon as a "foreign language," placing it alongside French, English, Spanish, and Lombard.

Today, many linguists (e.g., Bec 1970) would place Gascon together with Catalan and Occitan (the term used today to refer to what was once called "Provençal") in an Occitano-Romance branch of the Romance languages. This group forms a bridge between Ibero-Romance and Gallo-Romance. However, the history of the French state has placed speakers of Gascon in the same sociolinguistic and political situation as Occitan speakers, and, for this reason, most of those concerned about the survival of Gascon prefer to see it as a dialect of the latter. I will take no definitive position here on the language/dialect question with respect to Gascon, although it will occasionally be useful to contrast it with "Occitan."

Although the Gascon linguistic zone extends as far north as Bordeaux and the Garonne river, the regions bordering the Pyrenees have traditionally been the linguistic and cultural heart of Gascony, and they will be the focal point of this study. The population of this zone remains more than 40% rural, and only three towns in the region have over 15,000 inhabitants. As French replaced the local language in one social domain after another, the usual complex of negative attitudes toward Gascon gradually became dominant. The process of language shift is especially striking here, however, because it happened quickly. When the surveys were done for the *Atlas linguistique et ethnographique de la Gascogne* in the 1950s, there were still villages in which the small children spoke only Gascon.¹ Today, while there are still individuals in

¹ Séguy, *Atlas linguistique de la Gascogne*, v. 1. See, for example, the comments on informants at Aulus-les-Bains.

the Pyrenees who are more at ease speaking Gascon than French, all of them are bilingual, and the language has nearly ceased to be used for the primary socialization of children. Two recent surveys suggest that about 30% of the population is able to speak the language and about 50% can understand.² This is a relatively good situation for an endangered language, but these numbers are dropping rapidly.

It is common knowledge that France has been either antagonistic or indifferent toward its minority languages, according to the times. There have been small, but significant, steps forward in the teaching of the languages in the educational system, but signs of real progress in official language policy have only become evident very recently. It may be too late. There is one bright point, however, in the Gascon ethnolinguistic situation, and it is symbolized by that sign on the highway into Spain. An accident of history has left one of the valleys on the north slopes of the Pyrenees as part of Spain. The Aran Valley is officially part of Catalunya, and with the 1983 Law of Linguistic Normalization, the government in Barcelona gave official status to "Aranese," which is a dialect of Gascon (Winkelmann 1989). As a result, many speakers of Gascon now encounter writing in their native language for the first time when they cross the border looking for inexpensive sherry or artichokes.

Literacy has been the single most important focal point of language maintenance efforts in southern France since the time of Mistral in the nineteenth century. This should come as no surprise, for the French upper and upper-middle classes have always stressed effective manipulation of the written word as a measure of distinction. This respect for literacy is, naturally, enshrined in the educational system, where the classical 17th-century plays of Corneille, Molière, and Racine still hold pride of place. There is virtually no Gascon speaker in France today who does not have well defined beliefs about the necessity of an elaborated practice of literacy if a communicative system is to qualify as a real language. It may be that such a belief system is a serious impediment to the continuing survival of Gascon, but, at the same time, those who are concerned about endangered languages can never afford to ridicule or ignore the complex of beliefs and attitudes that surrounds literacy.

Literacy as Technology plus Ideology

Too often, language maintenance efforts have treated literacy as conceptually simple and unproblematic, except in the technical sense (orthography, writing materials, pedagogical approaches, etc.). Linguistics, in particular, has been cavalier in its treatment of literacy, at least in the

United States. Unexamined assumptions about the relationship between speech and writing abound in what is usually written on the topic. Introductory linguistics textbooks are almost always an embarrassment in their treatment of writing. This is frustrating, when a long tradition of anthropological research has taught us that literacy is not simply a question of technology, but that it is an extraordinarily complex cultural phenomenon (Street 1984).

It is crucial that we see literacy as a set of social practices, a constellation of conventions that govern the use of writing technologies. In all societies that possess it, literacy is superimposed on the oral communicative habits that form the basis of personal interactions, and it can relate to these in different ways. The actual *practices* of literacy are the outcome of an interaction between *writing technologies* and *literacy beliefs*. Many scholars use the term "ideology" to refer to such systems of beliefs and the power relations that they encode. From this point of view, literacy ideologies are part of the greater mass of ideology that constitutes political, economic and cultural belief systems. Beliefs or ideologies condition even the technical and linguistic principles involved in the creation of a writing system. The ideological aspects of debates about replacing Cyrillic systems in Central Asia with the Roman alphabet are well known. In southern France, a great deal of tension has arisen over the development of a writing system that is intended to be applicable to all of the forms of Gascon and Occitan, including Provençal. This system, developed by the Institut d'Estudis Occitans (IEO) over the first half of the 20th century, is predicated on the belief that all of these forms of language are really one (see Kremnitz 1974). While it allows for the notation of some major differences between Occitan and Gascon, it is not considered "standard" practice to note others. Today, this system, often called the "Occitanist" orthography, and the ideology for which it is the vehicle, have spread widely across southern France, though a few other systems continue to resist, particularly in Provence.

A successful orthography has the power to validate the language, to transform the ideologies of Gascon speakers, who in earlier days felt that their speech was not a real language, at least partly because it had no written form. But the evaluative decisions of standardization that inevitably accompany orthographic normalization always elevate certain language forms and dialects (those selected as the basis for the written language) over others. The downgrading of the status of certain varieties in the development of literacy may ultimately do great damage. If, for example, it has convinced those who speak mountain dialects that they do not speak "real" Gascon or "real" Occitan, then the development of literacy may have further threatened the transmission of the language.

Beliefs and attitudes also may be crucial in determining the *functions* that the written language may fulfill. In

² One survey was conducted in 1994 for the Conseil Général des Pyrénées-Atlantiques. The other was carried out in 1995 by the Conseil Général des Hautes-Pyrénées.

France a whole collection of purist and elitist beliefs tends to be connected with the written word, whether it is French or Gascon. Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998) point to the confidence native speakers often have in a bureaucratic or a scientific/technical fix for language maintenance. Such perceptions are natural enough in groups that feel they do not really control their own destinies. But in Pyrenean Gascon the problem is exacerbated by the constellation of French ideologies surrounding language. The ever-renewed and expanding collection of governmental and quasi-governmental offices and organizations devoted to language questions in France has helped to reinforce the illusion that all language problems are basically problems of written language and that they can ultimately be solved by bureaucracies (Ager 1996). It is thus unsurprising that in the Gascon and Occitan realm, there has been, over the past thirty years, something approaching an obsession with "official" orthographic decisions and with the authority of their originators.

Existing ideological stances like these cannot be ignored by language planners. Literacy must be discussed in terms of pragmatics, because the ideological context within which it operates determines to a large extent its nature and function and the contribution that reading and writing may eventually make to language loss or language maintenance.

Measures of Literacy Practice

The technical/linguistic problems of written Gascon can be said to have been largely solved.³ But an established and accepted orthography does not secure literate practice, even in a language whose spoken status is stronger than that of Gascon. In evaluating the potential strengths and weaknesses of a set of literacy practices and in planning for education and implementation of literacy policy, ideological issues are, if anything, even more important. It is possible to distinguish at least three measures of literacy practice, each of which has an important ideological component: depth, scope, and range.

Depth

I shall define *depth* as the extent and nature of social groups sharing positive literacy ideologies. The technical solutions that have been adopted in the writing system may have a significant impact on this measure. The IEO orthography, for example, does pose some problems in the Gascon case, because it assumes that readers will internalize a number of sound/letter correspondences that are very different from those of the French system they

have encountered in school. This has resulted in a large measure of resistance, particularly from the most capable speakers, who resent the efforts that this new disguise for their language requires of them.

However, the extent to which the ability to read and write approaches universality is not necessarily the only relevant measure of the health of literacy practices. If literacy needs to be seen as a social practice and not just a technology, then it has the potential of affecting society in general ways and may have considerable impact even on those who have not mastered the technical skills. In other words, one must not identify literacy and its power with the community of the literate.

A glance at the history of the Gascon Pyrenees is useful in searching for new perspectives on the expansion of literacy. The speakers of endangered languages sometimes have a collective memory of a golden age in which their language had high status. In the case of Gascon, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries represent such a period. In the Pyrenean principality of Bearn at that time, for example, a large-scale survey of the remaining serfs was carried out (Raymond 1878). A number of peasants were able to show written evidence that documented their freedom; some of those who had lost such texts because of fire or war were able to name the notary who had legalized the transaction. And the illiterate shepherds of the Ossau Valley became quite clever manipulators of textual material, demanding two copies of the same document from different notaries simply to make sure that they had as solid a legal foundation as possible in protecting the winter grazing land of their flocks. They were known to seek out in the documents that they had collected (with the help of a notary) the slightest expression liable to provide support for their cause (Tucoc-Chala 1970). This is a very literate conception of social relations and documentation. In other words, when literacy structures relationships for the community as a whole, both illiterate and literate may be participating in its practices.

Thus, *depth* should not be confused with the extent of literacy skills in the traditional sense. It may be that the building of an ideology of literacy that allows large numbers of people to identify with and participate—even marginally—in literate practices is ultimately more important to language maintenance than the spread of actual skills in reading and writing. Our tendency to see alphabetization, the teaching of basic reading and writing skills, as the crucial goal in the promotion of literacy may not always be appropriate.

Scope

The second perspective on literate practice I have called *scope*, and I shall define it as the breadth of literacy events that are perceived as normal and acceptable in the language. The idea of recapturing high prestige domains

³ There is a certain awkwardness, however, in the fact that the IEO principles that dominate all over southern France are used in French Gascony, but that the writing system adopted in 1981 for the Aran Valley, the one place where Gascon has official status, is somewhat different.

in the evolving diglossic situation is often of primary importance in the minds of defenders of endangered languages, and the Occitanist movement, unsurprisingly, has promoted with particular vigor the production of literary and scientific work in Gascon and Occitan. However, domains that Gascon literacy actually once had a chance of recapturing, such as agricultural documentation and religious devotional literature, have been relatively neglected. And, unfortunately, Gascon is competing for literacy domains with French, a world language that is strongly supported not only by an elaborate administrative bureaucracy, but also by a venerable evaluative ideology that gives it very special status. The struggle over literacy domains is, as we know, related to other struggles for cultural power, and the match in this case is far from equal.

Here again, the practices of literacy in 14th-century Gascony are illuminating. The middle and upper classes of that period were exploring the continually expanding scope of written language: account books, legal codes, inventories, anthologies, manuals — it was a time in which all of knowledge was being categorized and classified in Gascon. The large-scale surveys of population and forest domains in Bearn are typical of this impetus that also produced massive encyclopedias and how-to books.⁴ Latin in the fourteenth century had already lost most of its uses to vernacular Gascon in this region. Outside the Church, only a very small number of extremely solemn documents (a few wills, certain treaties between sovereign states) were formulated in Latin, and even these tended to disappear in the last half of the century. Moreover, Church documents, too, when they necessitated the presence of a notary, were often formulated in Gascon.

The passing of the rights to literacy out of the hands of the clergy into that of the upper and middle classes, as the vernacular became an acceptable written medium for increasing numbers of domains, is part of the transfer of power in every other sense. But it took place in a setting where Gascon was being chosen as the medium for new functions, those of an evolving bureaucracy and long-range commerce. Today it is difficult to find new literate functions that Gascon can fulfill. In such a situation, Gascon literacy tends to be automatically relegated to the margins of social life. Even in the Aran Valley, where the local society has gained a measure of political autonomy, many of the uses of written Gascon are, in fact, redundant. The extent to which economic considerations and the weight of the dominant Catalan and Castilian cultures may still sabotage attempts at reversing language shift in that tiny area remains to be seen.

There is one possible range of new uses for Gascon literacy. Because of the way in which it solves some of the

traditional hurdle of distribution costs, the Internet may hold some potential as a source of new functions for Gascon. Today one can begin to find Gascon web sites containing regional information that is available nowhere else. The audience of native speakers for Web-based information is still very small, however.

Range

The third perspective that I shall adopt for evaluating literacy health is one that has been less discussed than the others: I shall call it *range*. This we may define as the potential geopolitical clout of the written language, the power that a literacy holds as a result of its validation by external groups. In essence, range is a measure of the cultural capital that literacy in the language represents in the larger world. An increase in range for the literate practices of a language is one significant contribution that literacy can make to reversing language shift, for it means a relatively certain change in the ideology that is destroying the language's vitality.

In the fourteenth-century, Gascon was already a widely accepted medium of communication far beyond its home region. It was used in the correspondence of the Lords of Bearn with all the rest of southern France, including the city council in Papal Avignon, and it was used with the court of Aragon.⁵ Of course, Latin was required for missives to the Pope and other high-placed Church figures. And French was also becoming a necessary tool. Local princes might write to the King of Aragon in Gascon, but they wouldn't think of communicating in their language with the King of France, the King of England or the Black Prince. The shape of things to come was already discernible in this situation: the language's range was widening, but its limits were already becoming obvious.

Today, one can point to a number of indicators of progress in the *range* of Gascon literacy. Pyrenean Gascony is today the most dynamic zone of cultural activism in the whole of the Occitan regions in France. The only weekly Occitan newspaper, *La Setmana*, is edited in this area and always contains a significant number of texts in Gascon. While there are occasional complaints from other regions about the difficulty of reading these texts, most of the newspaper's readers seem to have accepted the legitimacy of written Gascon in a pan-Occitan context.

In the context of France as a whole, however, expansion of the range of Gascon has been minimal. Thirty years ago, many French people in the northern half of the nation were unaware that Gascon even existed as a spoken tongue. Today, the language has at least some presence in the minds of the average citizen, though for many it is more an element of picturesque folklore than a living re-

⁴ Among the 14th-century surveys in Gascon is Raymond 1873. See also Tucóo-Chala 1955.

⁵ Archival work in Pau, Tarbes, Toulouse, and Avignon.

ality. The Occitanist movement has been most concerned with *scope*, and still today faces the odd majority perception in northern France that Occitan and Gascon speaking are even less vital than they are in fact.

In contrast, with the continuing development of the European Union and the concomitant fading of national borders, southern France is renewing its ancient ties to Catalunya. Remarkable changes in the range of Gascon over the past decade have resulted from the legal recognition of Aranese and, subsequently, a new awareness of Gascon and Occitan in Catalunya as a whole. To the surprise of many in Barcelona, communication with these regions is often possible without the use of French. Secondary school students in certain schools in Gascony (and in other parts of Occitania) have been exchanging letters with students in the area around Barcelona. Neither Spanish nor French appears in the correspondence. More significant still in terms of range is the appearance in March 1998 of a Gascon-language supplement in the Saturday editions of *Avui*, the Catalan daily newspaper. Distributed all over Catalunya, this supplement serves to validate the language in a way that is nearly unthinkable in France, where, even in the Gascon-speaking regions themselves, the presence of the language in the mainstream media is negligible.

Gascons are also beginning to understand the extent to which technology can have an impact on the *range* of their language. While the Internet is, on the one hand, serving to reinforce the range of dominant languages, it also has the potential of providing opportunities for the public use of endangered languages that were nonexistent ten years ago. An indication of changing attitudes is the remarkable intercultural dialogues that take place on the List-Occ discussion list.⁶ Practically all of the very abundant contributions are in Occitan, Gascon, or Catalan, and, while there have been cases where individuals complained about difficulties understanding Gascon or Catalan, the overall tenor of these discussions is undeniably positive. Moreover, some participants—for example, from the Occitan-speaking valleys of Piedmont Italy or from Portugal or Spain—have indicated that they would have much more trouble participating if the list were conducted in French. The realization that Gascon allows communication across national boundaries is a powerful addition to the ideology supporting language renewal.

Conclusion

No one who is concerned about the status of endangered languages at the beginning of the twenty-first century needs to be reminded that time is running short and that language maintenance efforts need to be implemented immediately. But when every moment counts, we have to

be certain that we are mobilizing our forces in the most effective way. All modern planning for endangered languages involves the promotion of literacy. There are good practical reasons for this; for example, the transmission of information relevant to the speech community in its own language will in many cases be accomplished most efficiently in some form of writing. But justifications of an ideological nature for a focus on literacy are more imperious still. In societies like those of Europe, there exist strong beliefs about language that tend to privilege the written form, and these cannot be ignored. However, the Occitan intellectual elite, formed in the French school system, tends to direct its energies primarily toward puristic regimentation. It is hard to argue that the small details of orthography that are endlessly debated among the militant supporters of Gascon and Occitan constitute high stakes in the struggle for the survival of a language. This is a case where existing belief systems work against the long-term survival of a language and a culture. But that is precisely the ideological predicament of every endangered language. Successful language maintenance efforts require, first of all, a change in attitudes and ideologies.

It is widely recognized that the extension of the uses of writing in the endangered language to new functions (increase in *scope*) has a positive impact on the speech community's self-image and on ideologies that encourage language maintenance. However, I have argued that there are at least two other ways in which literacy may contribute to language maintenance. The expansion of the *depth* of social groups that recognize minority-language literacy and share positive literacy ideologies (whether or not the individuals actually master reading and writing) is a significant factor in itself. The sense that there are important things that one can do with writing in the endangered language may be even more important than the actual spread of alphabetization. And attempts at augmenting the range of the written language, realized in acts of acceptance and recognition from outside the community, have the potential for making some of the strongest contributions to language maintenance. The expansion of depth and range constitute important modifications of language ideologies, which, after all, are at the heart of the problem of language loss.

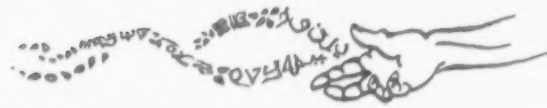
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Endangered Languages and Literacy



5

Promoting Literacy

Perspectives on Literacy in Endangered Language Revitalization

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It is often controversial whether curriculum for the teaching of aboriginal languages, which have persisted for millennia strictly as oral traditions, should include a literacy component.

The observations presented here derive from our participation in a collaborative language revitalization program which teams university resources (linguists, anthropologists, language educators, museologists) with members of an urban First Nations community whose traditional language, a unique dialect of Salish, is seriously endangered: there is one fluent native speaker (age 90) of this unique dialect resident in the community.

The program currently entails a three-year sequence of university-accredited language courses. Community members play a vital role not only as second language learners, but also as linguistic and cultural consultants, co-instructors, researchers, participants in curriculum development, and community liaison. Recently the community has initiated a Grade 5 language/culture program, and a kids' summer language camp.

Our perspectives on literacy are cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and cross-generational, deriving from the Elders, parents, linguists, curriculum designers, teachers, and students (age 11 and up)¹ who have participated in this language learning process. Aspects of literacy which engender concern include, potentially:

- (1) de-emphasis of oral proficiency and rhetorical styles;
- (2) diminution of auditory memory skills;
- (3) shift in cognitive perception, comprehension, processing.

However, there is strong agreement that literacy has significant enhancement effects in several domains. Three of these are discussed here.

¹ Note, critically, that our conclusions do not purport to relate to younger children. The age at which literacy is introduced into the language learning process is an important independent issue and not addressed here.

Endangered L2 (Second Language) Learning

The phonological, morphological, and syntactic systems of the language differ significantly from English. Because Endangered L2 learners are not situated in a community environment of fluent speakers which would provide consistent 'natural' exposure to the spoken language, literacy - through visual discrimination - has significantly enhanced oral fluency. Phonologically, it helps develop auditory discrimination skills and accuracy of pronunciation. Morphosyntactically, it helps learners recognize relationships between different words and identify consistent word-internal morphological patterns, and then to extend this understanding to novel contexts. Mastering reading and writing skills has deepened these L2 speakers' awareness of and pride in the complexity and richness of their traditional language heritage. Literacy also passes forward the "old" language from archived records, deepening people's current understanding of what gave meaning to their ancestor's lives.

L1 (English) Language Skills

Learning literacy in the language has also had identifiable positive transfer consequences for L1 English language skills. Parents and teachers report enhancement of reading strategies and performance, improvement in printing skills and spelling accuracy, and better understanding of English grammar. They also report significant improvement in self-esteem and motivation.

Long-term Language Preservation Goals

In order to effect a change from Endangered L2 status to Stable Bilingualism, it is not sufficient simply to teach the ancestral language and establish a core of active language speakers. The longer term goals entail that some community-based speakers also acquire the pedagogical skills to teach pre-school through university level language classes, and that others learn the requisite skills for transcription, documentation, analysis, archiving, and curriculum design to continue community-directed language research and development programs. Literacy skills are integral to the realization of these goals, and hence to the longevity and stabilization of L2 revitalization efforts.

Incorporating Literary Style Prior to Literacy in the Elementary Tribal School

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Abstract

In this paper we discuss the issues translators of oral literature face. Specifically, we examine Lushootseed, the Salish language spoken in Puget Sound, Washington, and we look at examples of translation styles and examine the context, the audience, and the intent of each. We show how the more "difficult" or "academic" or "non-Western" translation may be more appropriate than a freer, Western-style translation for children who are not even literate in the language. Translations that keep intact the literary figuration and patterning are being used at Tulalip Elementary School in Marysville, Washington, with students who are not literate or even speakers of the language. The results, however, are very impressive and show that literacy need not precede language preservation efforts.

Introduction

The two translation styles shown below represent extremes on the spectrum of translation style. Both translations are from "Mink and Changer," told by Martha Lamont at Tulalip Indian Reservation in 1963.

(1) Translation by Vi Hilbert in *Haboo: Native American Stories from Puget Sound* (Hilbert, 1985):

There was Mink. Mink was out traveling around when he came upon a very beautiful sight: a nice hot fire with salmon browning on skewers. The skewers were made of ironwood and leaned just the right distance from the heat. Oil from the salmon was beginning to drip, so Mink knew that this fish was just ready to eat. What a temptation! He was so hungry, and the old man was sound asleep there by the fire. Mink quickly took the cooked salmon off the skewers and ate it. It was so good, he ate all of it before he walked on.

(2) Translation by Crisca Bierwert in *Lushootseed Texts* (Bierwert, 1996):

- 1 There was Mink.
- 2 Mink was there.
- 3 He was walking.
- 4 Yes, Mink was walking.
- 5 Mink was walking.
- 6 And then
he came upon someone.
- 7 As usual, he stole the salmon

- 8 that the old man was roasting, that Mink.
He stole that salmon
that he was roasting on his fire.
- 9 And this old man was asleep.
- 10 And then
this guy came, this certain Mink.
- 11 Then he ate the salmon himself
that someone else was roasting.
- 12 And then, his food was gone.

The Lushootseed text for the second translation (2) above is on the facing page in the original and the layout of the English reflects that of the Lushootseed which is arranged to reveal formal structures of the storytelling. Numerous footnotes discuss the figuration throughout the text. We pose the question of whether a translation like (2) has an audience among its own Lushootseed community. Is a textbook such as *Lushootseed Texts*, from which this passage was taken, useful to the people from whom the stories were taken?

On Translation

The dilemma of faithfully translating works of literature from one language to another while retaining the feeling and importance of the original has become a great concern to many recently. Many translations are felt to not truly convey the intended meaning in the original language, and, further, are even deemed an injustice to the beauty of the language from which they have been taken. As Ronald Macaulay (1994) says in *The Social Art*: "The translatability of words or texts between two languages is not a matter of mere readjustment of symbols. It must always be based on a unification of cultural context. Even when two cultures have much in common, real understanding and the establishment of a community of linguistic implements is always a matter of difficult, laborious, and delicate adjustment" (159). Simply put, many believe that the cultural origins of the literature must be taken into account when attempting to relay the message of the original document from one language to another so as to retain the intended emotion and impact of the original. Swann (1992) says of the challenge of translating, "...Translation, as we have sometimes tried to practice it, is not the reproduction of, or stand-in for, some fixed original, but...it functions as a commentary on the other and itself and on the differences between them." (65).

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Edward Sapir, the famous American linguist, once said, "No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality" (Macaulay, 1994: 159). Therefore, it may be impossible, or indeed very difficult, to relate the hardships of an intense winter to someone who has lived their whole life in the tropics, or to relate the incredible size of the world's oceans to someone who has lived in a land-locked environment. This is as much due to the perceptions of the people involved as it is to the flexibility of the language they use. As Bierwert (1996) quotes Walter Benjamin in *Lushootseed Texts*, "The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue" (37-38).

Other obstacles must be dealt with in the process of translation. There is the general challenge of how to correctly convey the intended feeling of the original piece—choices of syntax, vocabulary, style. The translator must also decide what type of translation he or she is intending to achieve and for what audience—a strictly literal translation or a freer one that sounds more natural in the target language. Another challenge of translating languages that have not been traditionally written down is how to convey the nuances of a work that was intended to be spoken and performed. Until recently, Native American literature was exclusively oral, "formulated, communicated, and preserved in the spoken, changed, and sung word" (Swann, 1983:93). Much of this literature belongs in a larger context of ceremony that is not replicable. Says Swann, "The inflections of song, the rhythms of drums and dance, the delicate and insubstantial gesture of the teller, are impossible to replicate in the most careful of explanatory notes" (Swann, 1983: 93). It is the difficulty of reproducing these characteristics of a piece that has led some translators to radically alter the content and form of the original native oral narrative, thus taking some of the intended importance and casting it by the wayside. (Swann, 1983). With oral works, it is not just the basic meaning that is important, but also the tone, rhythm, pitch, and speed of the words. It is also, of course, difficult to translate rhyme, alliteration, and other literary effects that depend on sound sequences. As Nietzsche says in his essay *On the Problem of Translation*, "What is most difficult to translate from one language into another is the tempo of its style: that which is grounded in the character of the race or, to speak in a physiological manner, in the average tempo of its 'metabolism'" (Schulte and Biguenet, 1992). He goes on to say that some translations are gross, albeit involuntary, generalizations and that they can almost be considered "forgeries" since they do not accurately portray the intended structure of the original. Swann (1983) summarizes well the challenges of translation, specifically here of Native American languages into English with this quote: "In searching for the essence of a piece, the translator must choose between satisfying the requirement that the translation preserve the literal content of the work—neither adding concepts or images perhaps implicit of the original, nor deleting 'useless' repetitions or 'blatant' commonplaces that surprise and tire the English

reader—and satisfying the requirement that the translation convey the spirit of the original" (89).

To illustrate some of the translation styles, let's consider Hymes' (1981) example of a Chippewa poem collected and translated by Henry Schoolcraft, a pioneer ethnographer. Schoolcraft gives the text followed by a literal and then a literary translation.

Wau wau tay see!	Wau wau tay see!
Wau wau tay see!	Wau wau tay see!
E mow e shin	Was sa koon ain je gun.
Tahe bwau ne baun-e wee!	Was sa koon ain je gun.
Be eghaunbe eghaun—ewee!	

(1) literal translation:

Flitting-white-fire-insect! waving-white-fire-bug! give me light before I go to bed! give me light before I go to sleep. Come, little dancing white-fire-bug! Come, little flitting white-fire-beast! Light me with your bright white-flame-instrument—your-little candle!

(2) literary translation (using English literary style)

Fire-fly, fire-fly! bright little thing,
Light me to bed, and my song I will sing.
Give me your light, as you fly o'er my head,
That I may merrily go to my bed.
Give me your light o'er the grass as you creep,
That I may joyfully go to my sleep.
Come, little fire-fly, come, little beast,
Come! and I'll make you tomorrow a feast.
Come, little candle that flies as I sing,
Bright little fairy-bug—night's little king;
Come, and I'll dance as you guide me along,
Come, and I'll pay you, my bug, with a song.

Hymes offers a third translation as a "more adequate tribute to the original":

(3) literary translation (maintaining literary style of original):

Flitting insect of white fire!
Flitting insect of white fire!
Come, give me light before I sleep!
Come, give me light before I sleep!
Flitting insect of white fire!
Flitting insect of white fire!
Light me with your bright white instrument of flame!
Light me with your bright white instrument of flame!

The translation in (3) does more justice to the original with its attention to the amount of repetition while still keeping the overall feeling of simplicity that is lost in the Westernized style of the second translation.

Perhaps a translation such as the second one above that uses the poetic style of Western literary tradition would be

deemed more appropriate for one's first exposure to the literature of the language. Perhaps using a style we are familiar with can make the literature more accessible. However, the literary style of the original is completely lost. In the next section we further discuss "literary translations" like Hymes' above.

On Presentation and Analysis

The amount of background information to give readers is another issue when presenting translations of Native American stories. Much of the meaning and intent of the stories can be lost on readers who are unaware of aspects of the traditional culture of a group. In the case of Lushootseed, there is a clear discrepancy between the presentation of Lushootseed literature by the native Puget Salish themselves, such as Vi Hilbert, and by non-Native academics. Part of this discrepancy involves the issue of whether or not to disclose meaning. Since many Lushootseed stories are so different from traditional Western stores, there is much to synthesize and analyze. However, many Lushootseed do not want the morals or meanings behind texts to be discussed. In the introduction to *Huboo*, a collection of stories translated and edited by Vi Hilbert, a native speaker of Lushootseed, she says, "My elders never said to me, 'This story carries such and such a meaning.' I was expected to listen carefully and learn why the story was being told. Though guided, I was allowed the dignity of finding my own interpretations" (Hilbert, 1985: viii). Indeed, in conversations with Hilbert, she says that it is an insult to the intelligence of the listener for a storyteller to disclose any story's meaning; it is to assume that the listener cannot attach any meaning without the aid of the storyteller. A good starting point, then, for scholars to present Lushootseed literature in English with any degree of authenticity is to maintain this practice. However, this goes against a longstanding tradition in Western storytelling to discuss the moral and meaning of a story. When non-natives attach meaning to Lushootseed literature, they are assuming a role that the original storytellers themselves did not typically assume—that of interpreter. For a student of Lushootseed literature to assume he or she is in the position to interpret stories of a culture without having intimate familiarity with that culture is nothing short of an act of arrogance.

This is not to imply, however, that analysis on all levels automatically yields a disrespectful treatment of the literature. Analysis of storytelling techniques can be particularly revealing. As Toby Langen's work illustrates, much of the Lushootseed literature makes use of various types of figuration—interlocking repetition, circular figures, concentric circular figures, for example. A study of these elements is a study of Lushootseed oral techniques and their specific purposes in the context of the story. While interlocking repetition serves to propel the text forward, a circular figure tends to make the reader/listener pause and reiterates a point, for example. Langen (1989), in her analysis of one Lushootseed story, "Mink and Changer," notes that although many non-Indians realize that Native American texts contain different conventions than do

European narratives, "...it is difficult to put a name to the features by which the felt differences are carried" (77). The recurring conventions that Langen discusses are not unique to Lushootseed literature and the terms have long been used, primarily to describe literature stemming from an oral tradition. Structured repetition, for example, is found in much of the world's literature and has been discussed by Thalmann for Greek (Thalmann, 1984), Alter in *The Art of the Biblical Narrative* (1981), Shuka for Tlingit (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer, 1987), and others. Examples from Bierwert (1996) of some of these patterns are given below:

A circular figure has the form (A1, B, A2), as the following example shows:^{1,2}

- A1 g^wal (h)uy, l^cisax^w
 B baqadadidax^w [ʔa] tiʔaʔ [s]asq^walb [ʔa ti] luʔ^c ʔa tiʔaʔ sʔuladx^w, tiʔil bas^cab.
 B qadadid [ʔa] tiʔaʔ [s]asq^walb[s] ʔa tiʔil sʔuladx^w ʔal tiʔaʔ huds.
 B g^wal tuʔitutax^w <ti... tiʔaʔ luʔ^c.
 A2 g^wal (h)uy l^cilax^w tiʔaʔ gət, tiʔaʔ cədił bas^cab.

And then he came upon someone.

As usual he stole the salmon that the old man was roasting, that Mink.

He stole that salmon that he was roasting on the fire.

And this old man was asleep,

And then this guy came, this certain Mink.

Interlocking repetition ((A) A B, B C, C D, etc.) involves a series of pairs of repeated items in which the last element of the former pair becomes the first element of the next pair:

- A Then the poor fellow went.
 B Yes, that old Mink went.
 C Then he arrived.
 D Then "What are you doing?"
 E He wants to help butcher what is left of Deer.
 F He wants to help.

In a concentric figure one circle is found inside another (A1, B1...X...B2, A2):

- A1 So then Crow travels on the water.
 B1 The day is very bright.
 X It is calm.
 B2 The day is intensely bright.
 A2 Thus she travels.

Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock are two of the most influential analysts of Native American literature. Hymes' technique involves dividing stories into acts, verses, and

¹ Symbols enclosed in brackets [] indicate performance errors—sounds not pronounced in the recording, but present in the actual word. Words enclosed in angled brackets < > indicate false starts.

² I have substituted the symbol [ʔ] for the glottalized barred lambda typically used in Lushootseed orthography. It represents a voiceless ejective lateral alveolar affricate.

scenes and arranging these elements on the page in a way that shows their relationships within an organizational hierarchy. Hymes strongly believes in the importance of studying the text in the original language and his method of organizing the texts makes it possible for those not familiar with the language to still see structural and rhetorical features of the original. Tedlock's technique reflects the sounds of the original story, using markings to indicate pauses, tone, and speed, for example, in order to replicate some of the features of the spoken original.

The sorts of analyses and ways of organizing texts that Bierwert, Hymes, and Tedlock (among others) employ have, primarily, an audience of non-Native academics. Is there a place for such discussion in a Native American community? Most Native Americans are not native speakers of their language, and most Native American communities are now facing the near extinction of their language. Can, then, analyses of their language that discuss figuration and repetition and the like be at all useful or relevant for them? Students and teachers at Tulalip Elementary School in Marysville, Washington seem to think so.

Tulalip Elementary School

The fourth grade class at Tulalip Elementary is called a Tulalip-based Classroom. It is team-taught by a school-district teacher, David Cort, and a tribal teacher, Michelle Balagot. The class's curriculum satisfies all state benchmarks, but uses Tulalip (Lushootseed) language, literature, and culture to do so, wherever possible. The school's educators declare that as they look to meet state benchmarks in education levels for their students, they will also be sure to provide a curriculum based upon two main components: a reliance upon available resources from Lushootseed literature, culture, and language and an incorporation of these aspects into all workable areas of the students' education. There are perhaps six fluent speakers of Lushootseed left—all elders. None of the students at the school are native speakers or come in with much knowledge of the language. However, Natives and non-Natives alike are being taught in Lushootseed and reading its literature.

Typically, in a reading class, the students first listen to a story being told (in Lushootseed) and then read it in translation (with the Lushootseed text on the facing page). To follow up, the students discuss the story, draw illustrations to accompany it, and find and discuss literary characteristics such as repetition and circular figures. Then they are allowed the opportunity to create their own stories or versions of stories while applying the rules and patterns of Lushootseed literature to their own creations.

Teacher David Cort discusses the importance of the unique features of the Lushootseed literature:

"Repetition is one such feature. In many oral literatures, like Tulalip literature, the artful use of repetition not only lends beauty to a story; it also helps listeners remember the story better, and makes listeners attend to patterns in the story. In

Western literary tradition, repetition is often viewed as tedious, and so translators of Native stories sometime condense action and leave out repetitions which they feel are unnecessary or tiresome for the audience. In the Tulalip-based Classroom we teach students to *value* repetition as a special feature of Tulalip stories, and so teach them to *recognize* and *appreciate* repetition." (Tulalip website, 2000)

One can see this appreciation of literary style at work in a story told by Samantha, a fifth grade student at Tulalip Elementary. After hearing "Owl and His Wife Frog" as told by Martha Lamont, a tribal elder, Samantha decided that she wanted to make this story her own by telling it herself. In the story, which she has told repeatedly to the class and to her family, she develops her Lushootseed style and is careful to include meaningful repetition within the story.

Tekwtekwlus lived there with
his wife, Waqwaq.

Owl and Frog lived there and
they had a baby named Baby
Frog.

Baby Waqwaq started to cry
and cry.

Baby Frog started to cry and
cry and would not stop crying.

Waaqwaw tried to comfort her
baby.

Frog tried to comfort her baby
by saying, "Swuluq, swuluq,
swuluq," and wrapped her
baby tightly in a cradleboard.

The Lushootseed text appears on the same page and an illustration accompanies the story.

In studying the story mentioned at the beginning of our paper, "Mink and Changer," as told by Martha Lamont at Tulalip in 1963, the students at Tulalip Elementary use the version from Bierwert's *Lushootseed Texts* (modified very slightly by their teacher, David Cort). It has proved to be a useful translation for this Native community. None of the children at Tulalip are native speakers of Lushootseed, nor are the teachers, yet an effort is being made to teach the children in Lushootseed about Lushootseed language, literature, and culture. One aspect of the literary history and tradition of Lushootseed is the literary figuration and patterning which the students can see in the Lushootseed versions and the translations of them, and then use in their own works (in English). Seeing the Lushootseed on the page and having the English physically reflect the Lushootseed emphasizes the figuration, the sounds, and the style.

Conclusions

In conclusion, let's return here more directly to the question posed by this conference: what is the usefulness of focusing on literacy in language preservation efforts? In the case we investigated, students are not literate in the language when they come into the classroom and there is no direct instruction in reading and writing the language. However, students come to understand much of the spoken language, appreciate the literature and the literary style, and gain a great deal of knowledge about the culture. After this, students and teachers can focus on more direct instruction in reading and writing in Lushootseed with more success.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank David Cort of Tulalip Elementary School for his help and willingness to field our questions. Thanks too to the students in our English 439 class in Winter 2000 for useful comments and questions.

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Literacy Ability and Practice in Peru: An Indigenous Account

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Abstract

The overall literacy rate for most countries in the world is between 75 and 100 percent. By contrast, in most minority groups only one percent (or less) of the people can read and write. This discrepancy suggests that the needs of minority groups have often been ignored in decisions concerning literacy and education.

The current study considers both functional literacy and social aspects of literacy in the linguistically diverse country of Peru and traces how one ethnolinguistic minority group went from monolingualism and illiteracy in a local indigenous language, Shipibo, to bilingualism and biliteracy in their language and the national language, Spanish. Further explored is the Shipibo's own perception of themselves as readers. Examples of literacy practices among the Shipibo are given.

Oral surveys, administered to 237 Shipibo people, asked about literacy practices and ability. The results were used to create literacy indices that allowed for statistical comparisons using ANOVAs so that differences among age groups, gender and community of residence could be investigated. These results, combined with observations of literacy activity in the community, are used to describe the literacy situation among the Shipibo.

Introduction

The overall literacy rate for most countries in the world is between 75 and 100 percent. By contrast, in most minority groups only one percent (or less) of the people can read and write. This discrepancy suggests that the needs of minority groups have often been ignored in decisions concerning literacy and education. The implications of such disregard are particularly relevant to languages that are endangered (i.e. have a small number of speakers and/or are of low status) because among the first things children learn at school, an institution normally controlled by the people in power, is to read and write. Therefore, decisions such as which will be the language for literacy instruction are associated with social structure and power relations that have an effect on the future existence of a language.

Defining Literacy

How one defines literacy affects the analysis and discussion of literacy programs and progress among endangered language communities. This paper will take a two pronged approach when considering the literacy acquisition of the Shipibo, a group of approximately

20,000 people living along the Ucayali River and its tributaries in the Amazon basin of Peru. The first perspective is that of ability (this could be understood as a functional approach); the other incorporates a social view of literacy (as informed by Barton, 1995). Following this section on definitions, it will be shown how the Shipibo went from being largely illiterate monolingual Shipibo speakers to attaining biliteracy at a nearly societal level. Then, their own views about literacy as well as their literacy practices (Barton, 1995) will be examined from a social perspective.

Literacy ability – functional definitions

The term functional literacy, though widely used, is not clearly understood. How does one distinguish so-called "functional literacy" from "literacy"? For example, one organization makes the following claim, "When the Institute declares "literacy" to be the anthem of its mission, the Institute means to indicate not only general literacy but also basic literacy, functional literacy, computer literacy, cultural literacy, and numeracy (math literacy)" (<http://www.dowager.org/intro.html>). It is not at all clear how basic and functional literacy differ from each other or from general literacy.

The most common understanding of the term literacy includes the ability to read. "Reading is clearly primary to any definition of literacy and in some sense, the others are secondary. Writing, as a means of recording and communication, presupposes reading; otherwise it is mere copying. Similarly numeracy and document knowledge are supplemental to reading and have no role in the literacy equation without it" (Venezky et al., 1990). UNESCO classifies as literate anyone who can "read and write a simple statement on his or her everyday life" (UNESCO, 1993:24).

Literacy practices – A Social View

The above definitions refer to function or ability in literacy, but the social, ideological and political implications of literacy have long been acknowledged. Freire's approach to education and literacy encourages people to participate in the creation of the world as well as to free themselves from oppression (1970). Recent definitions allow various types of literacies that may change with time and place.

"Literacy involves a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development. The need and demand for these abilities vary in different societies. In a technological society, the concept is expanding to include the media and electronic text in addition to alphabets and numbers. Individuals must be given life-long learning opportunities to move along a continuum that includes reading, writing, critical understanding and the decision-making abilities they need in their communities." (The Center for Literacy of Quebec 2000 <http://www.nald.ca/litcent.htm>)

Barton (1995) supports a social view that allows for the idea that there is more than one type of literacy. He speaks of "literacy practices, [as] general cultural ways of utilizing literacy" and "literacy events, [...] particular activities where literacy has a role" (1995:188). By way of example of a literacy event Barton tells of two men planning to write a letter to the newspaper. They employ literacy practices when they decide how to divide up the related tasks, what kind of writing they will use, etc. (1995:188).

Street (1995:95) acknowledges a "multiplicity of literacies" and the New London Group (1995) created the term "multiliteracies" to allow for linguistic and cultural diversity in the discussion of communication and literacy.

Literacy in the Shipibo Context

Background

Fifty years ago, although the language had been recently written, there were no reasonable opportunities for monolingual Shipibo speakers to learn to read. The few schools in existence in the region were monolingual in Spanish, a language understood by only a handful of Shipibo people. In the mid-1950s a bilingual education program that began in Shipibo and transitioned to Spanish was introduced. By the mid-1970s most Shipibo communities in the region had at least a primary school. In the 13 communities visited in the current project, the average number of years the primary school had been in the community at the time of the study was 22.5.

Method

Literacy data were gathered by oral interview from 237 randomly selected Shipibo individuals, 119 women and 118 men, from 13 communities. Interviews were conducted in Shipibo or Spanish, as determined by the person being interviewed. The participants, ranging in age from 12 to 78 years, were divided into three cohorts for purposes of analysis. Cohort 1 (n=63) ranged from 78 to 40 years with an average of 50.7 years. Cohort 2 (n=65) ranged from 39 to 23 years with an average of 30.1 years. Cohort 3 (n=109) ranged from 22 to 12 years with an average of 16.6 years.

Participants were asked to rate their ability in reading and writing both Shipibo and Spanish. In addition, participants were asked what they read and with what frequency. They were asked whether and in what language they receive and write letters and whether they thought it was necessary for people in their community to be able to read and write in Shipibo and Spanish. Finally, they were also asked to describe in their own words what reading is.

Results

Literacy Ability among the Shipibo

Answers to the reading and writing ability question were given numerical rankings such that a measure of literacy in Shipibo, the Shipibo Index, and a measure of literacy in Spanish, the Spanish Index, was constructed. The range of possible scores for each index is from 0 (no ability) to 6 ("a lot" of ability) in both reading and writing.

The overall average Shipibo Index for the 237 people interviewed is 2.6, while the overall Spanish Index is 3.5. On average, males have higher index scores in both languages than females. The average Shipibo Index for the females interviewed is 2.2; for males it is 3.0. Spanish Index scores for females averaged 3.0, compared with males' 4.0 average. (ANOVA results revealed that these differences are significant $p < 0.01$). Males report greater ability to read and write both Spanish and Shipibo than females, and both males and females report better literacy skills in Spanish than in Shipibo. Table 1 shows the averages by gender.

	average Shipibo Index	average Spanish Index
females	2.2	3.0
males	3.0	4.0
overall	2.6	3.5

Table 3: Average Shipibo and Spanish Index scores for females and males

As can be seen in Table 2, the younger groups, the ones for whom school attendance was more likely, report better reading and writing ability than the older group. With rare exception, everyone interviewed who knew how to read and write learned these skills in school. Therefore, in order to demonstrate the effect of school attendance on literacy, the unadjusted means (that do not make adjustments based on how long respondents attended school) are given.

	Shipibo Index Unadjusted ¹ Means		Spanish Index Unadjusted Means	
	females	males	females	males
Cohort 1	0.9	1.9	1.0	2.6
Cohort 2	1.7	3.6	2.4	4.4
Cohort 3	2.9	3.5	3.9	5.0

Table 4: Spanish and Shipibo Indices by Cohort – Unadjusted means

Literacy in Shipibo Society

Answers to survey questions According to Barton, "[p]eople's literacy practices do not reflect abilities in any straightforward way, but rather they are to do with what they feel is or is not appropriate" (1995:190). In other words, people may know how to read and write, but not view themselves as "letter writers" or "newspaper readers". The above analysis indicates that Shipibo individuals have learned to read and write, at least to some extent, in both Shipibo and Spanish. To explore how this ability is transferred into practice, participants were asked what uses they make of literacy. Responses included reading books, newspapers, letters, and pamphlets given to them by health promoters or indigenous rights organizations and taking notes in school.

When participants were asked whether it was necessary for women and men to be able to read and write in Shipibo and Spanish, 76% answered yes to all (shown in table 3), indicating that, in their opinion, everyone should be literate in both languages.

	read Shipibo	write Shipibo	read Spanish	write Spanish
Is it necessary for women to	192	192	222	222
Is it necessary for men to	200	200	228	227

Table 3: Number of yes answers to questions concerning need for people to have reading and writing ability in Shipibo and Spanish (N=237).

When pressed for reasons why they answered yes, for Spanish, people gave reasons that ranged from reading and writing letters to being a condition for leadership in the community. Interesting to the discussion of the status of Shipibo as a language that may be threatened, many people contended that reading and writing in Shipibo

¹ When means were adjusted to account for years of school attendance, the differences were minimized. However, the unadjusted figures shown here demonstrate that the younger generations are learning to read in school.

would contribute the preservation of Shipibo language and identity.

Observations In addition to eliciting information about literacy practices, I made observations in each community. I witnessed people reading books in their hammocks during the customary afternoon rest. Several of the communities had small store-like operations stocked with provisions like rice, soap and batteries. Often a hand printed cardboard list announced what was available. The Health Clinics had posters attesting to the importance of washing hands, boiling water, and using birth control. I saw carvings in tables, on walls of houses, in trees, and writing in the sand. Based on these observations it can be concluded that at least some Shipibo use the printed word for self expression, to gain information and as a leisure activity. Interestingly, none of these activities was given in the surveys when people were asked what uses they make of literacy.

What is reading? Participants were asked to describe in their own words what reading is ("Para Ud., ¿Qué es leer?"). As would likely be the case for anyone who ponders such a question, most people found it difficult to answer. A number of people were unable to answer at all. Some people gave answers that included describing the process of grasping information. Interestingly, many respondents included in their answer something about sharing what was gained from the printed word with others who may not have experienced what was written. This final point supports Barton's challenge of "traditional images of the lone reader and the lone writer" (Barton 1995:188) and suggests shared societal involvement in literacy, even when not everyone reads.

Discussion : Language choice for literacy practices

In many of the above observations of literacy practices, the language of choice is Spanish. In every case of the store front signs, the list of provisions was done in Spanish. The remarkable thing about this is that both writer and most of the audience is Shipibo. Of course, the health information, provided by the Peruvian Government, was in Spanish. Information about which language is used for letters was elicited in the interview.

Table 4 summarizes the answers, demonstrating that most Shipibo people use only Spanish for letters, this is the case even when the recipient and writer are native speakers of Shipibo.

	only Shipibo	only Spanish	both	total	none
write letters	4	93	26	123	114
receive (read) letters	2	104	16	125	112

Table 4: Language use for letters (N=237)

Language choice for literacy is potentially of great consequence for endangered languages. Writing about Latin America, Rodríguez et al. fault the written word as a "paradigma castellanizador" (hispanicising paradigm). The pattern, as outlined by them, is "school / writing/ Spanish" (1983:xxiii). In the Shipibo context, written Spanish is given status over Shipibo because it is presented as the goal. That is, Shipibo is only used as a bridge to get to Spanish: in high school only Spanish is used. Street suggests that just as official and standard languages and varieties occupy uncontested positions of importance, literacy can be regarded in terms of varieties in order to show how "the dominant literacy marginalizes other varieties" (1995:100).

Conclusion: Opportunities for Empowerment

In one fifth and sixth grade class observed in the current study, the lesson focused on letter writing. The teacher dictated in Spanish how to write a letter while the students wrote down every word. Then the teacher gave an explanation in Shipibo and assigned the students to write a letter in Spanish. In the 15 or so minutes allotted for the exercise the students in my line of sight wrote the place, the date and "Sir:." Not only did students not have any idea what the content of the letter should be, they were getting the message that this literacy practice is the domain of Spanish; thus, the dominant literacy is legitimated as the language appropriate for letter writing. However, following Street's proposal that "literacies may be sites of negotiation and transformation" (1995:99), I would like to suggest that this practice of letter writing may be one that the Shipibo have adapted to meet their needs. They use this method to present their requests and petition for their rights to government offices. When people were asked in the interviews why they thought it was necessary for people to read and write, one of the common answers given was "hacer gestiones" (to conduct business/manage affairs on behalf of the community.)

If these literacy practices in Spanish can be transformational, how much more those that acknowledge Shipibo, a marginalized literacy variety? Hornberger (1995:251) cites examples of people that when encouraged to write in Quechua (an indigenous language of the Peruvian highlands, among other regions) found themselves not only improving or acquiring literacy skills, but also "that the opportunity to develop those language and literacy abilities led to empowerment for themselves and others around them" (1995:251).

The Shipibo community members, leaders and teachers that I spoke to had some creative ideas about how to maintain traditions that they value and at the same time accept the new technologies that they consider appropriate and beneficial. One such idea included introducing traditional Shipibo art into the school. Another, that was being carried out, included recording oral stories and writing them up in book.

Researchers have tended to evaluate literacy and education programs by measuring ability or examining

how the introduction of literacy has altered a previously oral culture. Because such societies almost invariably involve endangered languages, and so much is at stake as the newly literate communities make choices about literacy use, here, I have attempted to heed the suggestion of Kulick and Stroud that, "rather than stress how literacy affects people, [we should] take the opposite tack and examine how people affect literacy" (in Street 1995:102).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Patricia Davis who was instrumental during planning and fieldwork stages and to Paul Klawinski who helped with just about everything else. A grant from The Literacy Department of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc. provided a portion of the funding for this research. Special thanks to John Paolillo who gave good advice throughout this project.

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The Bilingual-Bicultural Program for the Tarahumara of Chihuahua

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a ten-month descriptive study of the *Programa de Educación Bilingüe-Bicultural* carried out in an elementary school for the Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico. Specifically, the paper illustrates the characteristics of the program as conceived by the State of Chihuahua in the framework of the national indigenous education policy. In addition, it presents the attitudes of parents and teachers toward the program and how the Tarahumara language is used in class for instructional purposes. It is proposed that in a socio-economically depressed indigenous community where the transmission of the indigenous language is still in place and the levels of bilingualism in the community are low, maintenance bilingual education programs should also be promoted in terms of their benefits as a tool for the creation of successful learners in both the indigenous and the national language and curriculum.

Introduction

Residing in the southwestern corner of the state of Chihuahua, the Tarahumara, or Rarámuri as they call themselves, are one of the largest Native American groups north of Mexico City, second only to the Navajo people in the American Southwest. Originally inhabitants of more than 28,000 square miles of mountainous and lowland terrain in the Sierra Madre Occidental, the Tarahumara have seen their land slowly reduced to half of its original size, since the first European contact in the early 1600s.

According to the 1995 INEGI census, the number of indigenous people (Tarahumara, Tepehuan, Pima, Guarojio) in the state of Chihuahua totaled 80,265, of which 92 percent were Tarahumara (CIDA, 1998), who reside in the Sierra Madre Occidental (or Sierra Tarahumara), in the southern and southwestern parts of the state. In the Sierra region inhabited by the Tarahumara, the *mestizos* (the Spanish term for ethnically mixed Mexicans) are the majority populations, with the exception of two *municipios*, where the Tarahumara account for 62.78 percent and 51.78 percent of the total population. The Tarahumara live in the most inhospitable parts of the Sierra, a rugged canyon and forest region that ranges from 1,000 to 3,300 meters, and reside predominantly in a pattern of scattered settlements (*rancherías*), underscored by a high percentage of localities with less than 499 inhabitants in Tarahumara-concentrated *municipios*.

If the Tarahumara have necessarily modified traits of their daily life due to the contact with the non-Tarahumara world since the colonial period, the core of

their culture nevertheless shows many of the distinct features that have characterized their lifestyle since the time of the Jesuit expulsion from Mexico in 1767 (Kennedy, 1976/1996). The geographical isolation of the Tarahumara *rancherías*, sustained on a corn-based economy, and the overt withdrawal of the Tarahumara from contact with the *mestizos* seem to have allowed the retention of most of the Tarahumara cultural elements. However, the increasing dependence of the Tarahumara on salaried work and seasonal migration, and the resulting intensified contact with the dominant society are showing signs of shift of the native language and culture toward the dominant culture and language in some areas of the Sierra. In this context of isolation and withdrawal, the school has represented the most fundamental tool for the penetration of the church and the state in the Tarahumara society (Sariego, 1998; Spicer, 1962).

National and state language policy: 1980s – 1990s

The first concrete attempt to create a specific educational program for the unique needs of the Tarahumara children was initiated by the State of Chihuahua in the late 1980s. Such a project found its roots in the national educational and language policy started in the 1980s. Specifically in 1985, the *Dirección General de Educación Indígena* (DGEI) formulated an educational policy for the indigenous populations at the national level in the form of the *Educación Bilingüe-Bicultural*. According to Coronado (1992), the goals of the policy were:

The development of the indigenous child starting from his cultural context and according to the historical necessities of his social groups and of the nation, allowing the student to develop his critical conscience and his intellectual creativity and fostering the processes of recuperation and development of cultures and languages. (p. 59)

The recognition and acceptance of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, at least on the theoretical level, as an asset to be maintained and fostered in the nation marked the major distinction between the language and educational policy for indigenous populations in Mexico in the last two decades. While in the past the value of native language literacy was seen first in its ability to solve the "Indian problem," and subsequently as a necessary stage before transitioning to Spanish and the *mestizo* culture, the recent educational

policy recognizes bilingual education as a cultural preservation tool (Coronado, 1992) opposing the widespread shift of any indigenous language and culture caused by the contact with the dominant society and language.

According to Hidalgo, by 1994, the federal government had officially accepted a plurilinguistic policy where (Hidalgo, 1994):

1. It is officially admitted that Mexico has fifty-six ethnic groups.
2. Since 1981, BBE (Bilingual/Bicultural Education) is under the jurisdiction of an independent organism affiliated with the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* and is directed by the first generation of Indians who studied ethnolinguistics and anthropology. The *Dirección Nacional de Educación Indígena* is attempting to utilize the research available to date in order to delineate a BBE that may respond to the specific needs of the indigenous population.
3. Article No.4 of the Federal Constitution ... is being amended to reassert that the country is multilingual and to protect the rights of individuals speaking any of the native languages of Mexico. (p. 200)

In order to implement the above political statements, the most recent official report, *Fundamentos para la Modernización de la Educación Indígena* (1990), published by the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*, proposed a new curriculum for bilingual programs with the following goals:

1. By the end of six years children will be fluent in all four skills in two languages.
2. A writing system for the Indian languages should be promoted.
3. Indigenous languages should be used as both a subject and a medium of instruction. (Hidalgo, 1994, p. 200)

Programa de Educación Bilingüe Bicultural (PEBB)

In Chihuahua, the 1970s and 1980s were dedicated mainly to the expansion of the educational infrastructures for indigenous children in the Sierra Madre, along with the systematization of the indigenous education system as a section integrated within the larger state education system. In 1987, the State of Chihuahua established a decentralized agency -- the *Coordinadora Estatal de la Tarahumara* (CET) -- whose main purpose has been to coordinate the initiatives directed for the improvement of the living conditions of the Tarahumara. The uniqueness of CET has been its responsibility for carrying out a reform of the indigenous educational system, according to the new federal language and educational policies for primary education (CET, 1997), and the trend toward decentralization and regionalization

of educational programs for indigenous groups. The *Programa de Reforma De la Educación Indígena* was initiated in 1990 as the outcome of a wide assessment (CET, 1989) of the state of Tarahumara education across the Sierra region. The *Diagnostico* was fundamental in indicating the cultural and linguistic obstacles involved in the relationship between school and community along with the basic deficiencies of the educational system. According to the Curricular Proposal of the *Diagnostico*, the CET designed the educational reform project with the objective of "adapting education to the specific cultural conditions of the ethnic groups, with the objective of creating real bilingual-bicultural schools inspired both by the interest and the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor needs of the children as well as the needs of their social groups" (SEP, 1992).

The Reforma was to take place through the *Programa de Educación Bilingüe-Bicultural* (PEBB), which followed the guidelines mandated by the *Ley General de Educación* (1993) as well as through the *Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Indígena* (1990), fostering:

... a double profile of the student ... a knower of his sociocultural reality who can be incorporated into the productive life of his community as a socially participative individual. At the same time, [the program] strives to form a student who, having the possibility of continuing to study in higher educational levels, is provided with equal education than the students graduating from the non-indigenous primary schools. (SEP, 1992)

Ultimately, the main challenge of the PEBB has been to provide the Tarahumara students with the possibility of developing and maintaining their unique cultural and linguistic traits without disregarding the national curriculum.

Through the *Oficina de Estudios Educativos Especiales* (OEEE, Office for Special Educational Studies), CET brought together a team of bilingual teachers, who, collaborating with various experts (educators, anthropologists, linguists), have been working on the elaboration and continuous revision of the curricular material of the PEBB, which was first piloted in the academic year 1991-1992 at the preschool and primary levels and subsequently spread out to the entire indigenous schools in 1992-1993.

The core of this program is the regionalization and adaptation of the content of the curriculum to the native environment and culture of the indigenous child, along with the introduction of native language literacy. Specifically, the program contemplates the use of the native language as the exclusive medium and subject of instruction in the first year of primary schooling. According to the program developers, on one hand, the use of the native language ensures a continuity between a

child's linguistic and cultural background and the beginning phase of formal education; on the other hand, the use of the native language in school is directed at ensuring that the linguistic development of the child is not truncated at crucial developmental stages. Finally, the use of the native language and contents could ensure their strengthening and preservation. This process is considered fundamental in avoiding the observed consequences of cultural and psychological displacement of indigenous children when confronted with direct instruction in Spanish upon entrance to school (CET, 1992).

Spanish is then introduced in the second grade in its oral component, while in the third grade, Spanish becomes another subject and medium of instruction, "respecting the spaces where the native language has to be employed, that is in the learning areas peculiar of the [native] culture." (CET, 1992, p. 9). In the remaining grades, the curriculum includes "a wider load of elements from the western culture without overlooking the particular ethnic contents" (CET, 1992, p. 10) and a wider use of Spanish. In this second phase, the program aims at the integration of the bilingual-bicultural intent with the national curriculum for the preparation of the students who will enter the middle schools, which are located outside of the indigenous communities and offer a Spanish-only national curriculum. At the same time, the program seeks to keep in line with the *Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización*, which requires bilingual literacy across the six grades, "incorporating the indigenous language in this case, through the standardized Tarahumara as another curricular area" (CET, 1992, p. 12). The textbooks are prepared accordingly, where different sections within the same subjects are written in one or the other language starting from the second grade. The use of Tarahumara in the textbooks slowly decreases across the grades leaving more space to Spanish, indicating the transitional nature of the PEBB.

In the academic year of 1998-99, the Department of Indigenous Education served a total of 15,182 children (Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua, 1999), through a system of 309 *albergue*¹ and day schools. Today, the CET continues to create and revision the bilingual-bicultural materials -- freely distributed to all the indigenous schools of the Sierra -- and provide summer teacher training courses to promote its implementation. However, the program has encountered many obstacles, which will be discussed in the following sections.

¹ The federal school system for the Tarahumara is divided in three different school types: the day school, the *albergue* and the *internado*. While the *internado* is a traditional boarding school, where children can reside all year long, the *albergue* is a five-day-a-week system, serving the children of the surrounding community and providing them with free board and accommodation.

The standardization of written Tarahumara

According to the *Diagnostico* (CET, 1989), there are five principal variants of Tarahumara based geographically in the western, northern, central, *cumbre* (plateau), and southern regions of the Sierra, and three in "transitional areas." In the most recent grammar produced by CET (Compendio, 1997), seven variants are recognized (Map 1). The existence of numerous Tarahumara dialects has prompted one of the most challenging and controversial aspects of the *Reforma de Educación Indígena* which was initiated in 1991 by the CET, and was still in progress during the 1998-99 period of the investigation: the creation of a standardized form of written Tarahumara. While the first educational materials in Tarahumara sponsored by the federal state date back to the 1940s², and dictionaries and grammars have been developed in the last century by various Jesuit linguists (Brambila, 1976; LLaguno, 1984; Vallejo, 1996), before CET's educational reform there had been no interest in developing a standardized form of Tarahumara. The DGEI, from its federal headquarters in Mexico City, also has kept producing its own materials in Tarahumara in a single variant (Alta), which are still sent yearly to the Tarahumara schools.

The rationale for the creation of the standardized Tarahumara was based mainly on criteria of language and culture unification and strengthening. On one hand, the proposers viewed the standardized language as an instrument of unification of the language community, which would enhance communication and reinforce the cultural and linguistic identity of the Tarahumara. As CET explained (CET, 1992, p. 2), one of the principal objectives of the educational reform of indigenous children was "to standardize the language, an action which becomes an element of cohesion within the Tarahumara culture, since after standardizing it, the language will become another variant for common use, highlighting its unifying action of the Rarámuri culture" (p. 2). At the same time, the standardized language was considered a fundamental tool in creating a bulk of literature in the native language, and, ultimately, would generate "in its users attitudes of language and cultural loyalty, pride and defense" (CET, 1989, p. 201).

² The first attempt at creating a written Tarahumara for scholastic use dates back to the 1940s, when the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) was collaborating with INI and SEP in providing the linguistic foundations for the *cartillas bilingües*, the first bilingual material for schools. The SIL created a Tarahumara alphabet based on the Spanish one, which was employed until the 1970s by the federal educational agencies. At this point, the political attrition between SIL and INI led to a rejection of SIL's linguistic work along with its presence in the country (*Diagnostico*, 1989).

Since 1991, various linguists have been training and guiding a group of bilingual teachers speaking the different variants of the languages, who have also had the responsibility of collecting Tarahumara materials for the textbooks in the form of traditional stories and historical narrations in the different regions and variants (CET, 1991). The CET (1995) so far has created a dictionary of the Tarahumara standard - Spanish, a grammatical summary of the standard Tarahumara which accompanies the bilingual textbooks for the whole primary education cycle, and a series of grammatical descriptions of the different variants of Tarahumara (Castro, n.d.; Chaparro, n.d.; Prieto, n. d.).

Case Study

The community

A descriptive study was carried out in the primary school located in Mawichi³, one of the most accessible all-Tarahumara villages in the uplands of the Sierra Madre Occidental, to analyze the level of implementation of the PEBB, in light of the teachers' use of Tarahumara in the class and the attitudes of teachers and parents toward Tarahumara literacy.

Located at 7,000 feet, in a small valley surrounded by canyon walls, Mawichi has recently become readily accessible to motorized transportation and become closer to Creel, a well-known destination for international tourism throughout the year. The short distance from Creel, the presence of a renowned mission built by the Jesuits in 1740, and the recent opening of a high-quality handicraft shop, have made Mawichi one of the top stops for tourists; almost every day of the year, at least one bus or car loaded with foreigners and Mexican tourists arrives in the village.

The village is the center of Sunday gatherings of the broader Tarahumara community for religious and land-related reunions, together with sport competitions and commercial transactions. The village is also where the health clinic, the largest boarding school of the *ejido* (land unit), and the civic registrar are located. However, the village is not where the majority of the Tarahumara families belonging to the *ejido* of Mawichi live. Apart from twenty families living around the church and school area, the rest of the Tarahumara - a total of 1247 people (Arzaga, 1998) - live in three to four house-clusters scattered around the valleys and canyons of the *ejido* (30,700 hectares), overlooking the cornfields that provide them with an annual ration of corn.

Language in the Community

According to the health clinic report census data (Arzaga, 1998), 44 percent of the population living within the boundaries of the *ejido* are monolingual speakers of

Tarahumara, 51 percent are bilingual where their first language is Tarahumara and five percent are monolingual speakers of Spanish. According to the observation of four households and 40 parent interviews, within Tarahumara-speaking families (where a few members of the household always possess some levels of bilingualism), Tarahumara is the language of communication. Children generally grow up and enter kindergarten as monolingual speakers of Tarahumara, showing that intergenerational transmission of the indigenous language is still very strong in the community.

Community members confirmed that apart from a small minority of people living in the village, the rest of the community were native speakers of Tarahumara. They perceived that the native language was not shifting, because "mothers here speak to their children in Tarahumara." At the same time, some signaled an increasing number of young males who left the community for seasonal work or for longer periods and returned with a tendency to speak and behave like *mestizos*. Attending middle and high school was also viewed as threatening the native language, since these schools were located in *mestizo* towns, were attended by a majority of Spanish-speaking students, and usually required the students to stay away from home for long periods. In general, within the community the dominant language was Tarahumara, and Spanish was restricted to contexts where monolingual Spanish-speakers were present (e.g., *ejido* reunion, school reunion).

Parents Attitude toward Tarahumara Literacy

Among Mawichi's parents, the Tarahumara language was valued as an asset. The fact that many people - often women - were still monolingual speakers of Tarahumara made the native language functionally necessary within the community and the family domain. At the same time, speaking Tarahumara clearly marked the ethnic identity boundaries between the indigenous community and the outside world. Many parents exclaimed that losing the native language would mean becoming *chabochis* (*mestizos*), and losing their fundamental ritualistic traditions.

However, literacy in Tarahumara was a newly proposed function of the native language which had not yet met the interests of the Tarahumara. The parents who were interested in the teaching of Tarahumara literacy were the monolingual speakers of Spanish, who viewed the biliteracy program as a way for their children to learn the indigenous language (and perhaps become well-paid bilingual teachers). A very small minority of parents perceived that writing in the indigenous language might prevent its shift and help the transmission of cultural traditions through the transcription of traditional legends and stories. However, the majority of the parents conceived of bilingual education in terms of the oral use of Spanish and Tarahumara in class for an easier instructional strategy geared toward the teaching of Spanish.

³ The name of the village is a pseudonym.

Finally, even when parents saw a purpose in Tarahumara literacy for cultural preservation, they criticized the bilingual-bicultural program designed by CET. Specifically, they found fault with the creation of the standardized Tarahumara as an incomprehensible language based on the Baja variant. The standardized language was perceived as competing with the local spoken variant. Some parents also said that the standardized Tarahumara resembled more closely the Baja variant because the majority of the language creators were speakers of that variant.

The School

The typical form of settlement and geographic isolation of the Tarahumara communities has pushed the federal and state departments of education since the 1970s to create a system of boarding schools for primary education throughout the Sierra, which can be reached by children in a maximum of one or two hours of walking. The location of the boarding schools within the community boundaries and the 5-day-a-week attendance arrangement allow children to return to their families during the weekends. The boarding school system represents a more accessible alternative to mainstream day schools and federal or religious year-around boarding schools (*internados*), which are usually far removed from the native communities.

Teachers Attitudes toward the PEEB Curriculum and the Standardized Tarahumara

The six teachers in Mawichi, of whom four were fluent bilinguals, had witnessed the launching of the *Programa de Educación Bilingüe-Bicultural* in the first half of the 1990s, and had attended the month-long summer teacher training courses organized by CET until 1995. As noted earlier, the PEEB had encountered many obstacles. In Mawichi in 1998, the CET books had arrived in order, as they had for the last seven years, and had been freely distributed to all the classes. Children had written their name on the books, and then stacked the books either on the classroom bookshelves, in open and dusty boxes, or under their chairs. None of the teachers had used the books. When asked what they thought about the *Programa de Educación Bilingüe-Bicultural*, the teachers shared similar opinions. The following sections will illustrate the teachers objections to the program.

Standardized Tarahumara

First, teachers criticized the standardized Tarahumara adopted for the textbooks. The objection was that the language was "nobody's" language since it was not spoken, and it was difficult to decode for both teachers and children. The language was said to be based on the Baja (low lands) variant which was not easily understood by the community in the Mawichi region, the Alta (highlands). In this respect, the use of the standard form of Tarahumara made the textbooks unusable and a

teacher commented that "the standardized language is not ours, and it's not comprehensible; there are some words that one doesn't understand, and I think this is bad, because if it's difficult for one [teacher], how difficult can it be for the children?" Another said:

It's fine to use the Tarahumara, but it should be the Tarahumara variant used by each community, only in this way would it work, because we, the teachers, most of the teachers, don't understand the standardized Tarahumara, and neither do the children. Well, according to them [the Coordinadora] the standard form is just for writing, while the community will continue speaking its own variant, but it's too difficult ... they have left out many words, because they chose some words from the Baja and some from the Alta, but they have left out many other words in the standard such as synonyms.

According to the director of the CET, the standardized form was in fact based on the Baja variant more heavily than on the others. He explained that at the base of such a decision was that fact that in the Baja variant the language had remained closer to the language of the older generations, with less influence from contact with other languages.

Contents

The teachers also criticized the content of the bilingual textbooks. The main purpose of the Coordinadora - which, according to the CET officers attempted to follow the recommendations of the same teachers - was to create textbooks which could replace the federal textbooks through a fusion of the fundamental content areas and the structure of the national curriculum with regional/ethnic contents and contexts. The rationale followed was to "give the different content areas a regional connotation" and "contextualize the books according to the Tarahumara cultural elements," according to two CET officers. Specifically, one explained that:

When we elaborate the books for the primary school, we cannot move away from the parameters of the national textbooks due to the fact that there are neither bilingual secondary and preparatory schools nor bilingual universities. When the child finishes sixth grade and enters the other type of school, he experiences a tremendous clash ... we cannot separate from the parameters of the national system; we have to follow the same patterns but adapt them to the indigenous level and context.

However, the idea of not using the national textbooks worried the teachers, who were greatly preoccupied with "providing the Tarahumara children with the same education as the rest of the Mexican children in the country." Using regionalized contents and adapting the national curriculum to the ethnic context, and translating the Spanish curriculum into Tarahumara, had

reduced the books to a "watered down" version of the national books according to the teachers, therefore unsuitable in preparing children for the higher educational levels at the mestizo schools. As one teacher explained, "The books created by the Coordinadora are almost the same as the national textbooks. The basic subject matters are the same. It's as if they chose the most important, the most basic and emptied it in Tarahumara."

Therefore, no matter what perspective they took, the teachers did not favor the bilingual-bicultural textbooks and felt more comfortable using the federal textbooks, which also came with a detailed class planning guide and included supplementary training sessions by the same federal agencies.

Tarahumara literacy

The failure to implement the bilingual program was also associated with more fundamental issues of the worth of literacy in the native language. On one hand, teachers seemed to have absorbed the national and state discourse of the authorities over the value of the native languages and cultures, expressing very positive attitudes toward the preservation of the Tarahumara language and culture. On the other hand, such discourse was not based on reasons compelling enough to make the teachers adopt biliteracy as their primary responsibility.

Writing in the native language as a tool for cultural rescue

All the teachers conceptualized native literacy as an important tool for the maintenance and strengthening of Tarahumara culture. Some teachers realized that their native culture and language was visibly shifting in some areas of the Sierra and that the school could provide a support for reversing the shift; they recognized that indigenous languages and cultures merited being maintained. Some of the teachers said:

The school has a very important task, because the school is the only way through which the indigenous people won't lose their culture, their language, and their dialect. Sometimes when people emigrate to other areas, when they go back to their *rancho* or village, they don't want to speak Tarahumara any longer, and this is what we don't want. There are many people who are hundred percent Tarahumara. They go somewhere else and there they pick up other habits and they don't go back to their village.

Many people say that we, the indigenous people, have very nice stories, therefore we have to rescue all of this, and to redeem it all we need is writing. There are very nice legends and they are only oral and if no writing exists, we won't be able to transmit them to other parts ... the main objective of writing in Tarahumara is indeed to preserve our culture.

Therefore the main functions the teachers perceived in the indigenous language literacy were those of language identity and culture maintenance. This

positive attitude and awareness of the potential benefit of native language literacy for the maintenance of the indigenous languages and cultures was indeed the predominant discourse of both the promoters of the Coordinadora's PEBB and the standardized Tarahumara.

School is for teaching Spanish.

At the same time, as the *Diagnostico* (CET, 1989) concluded ten years before, Spanish literacy was still considered as the primary and exclusive responsibility of the school, leaving no space for Tarahumara literacy development. According to some teachers, the preservation of Tarahumara was taking place within the family, while the school was the only place for the children to learn Spanish. The main preoccupation of the teachers was to provide the children with the means to successfully interact with the external Spanish-speaking world and to enter the mestizo middle school with an adequate knowledge of Spanish reading and writing skills. Some teachers said:

Children need more Spanish, because imagine that if the child cannot read or write well, when he goes to middle school he's going to encounter difficulties. Therefore I think that it's very important for the child to be able to study in Spanish. Tarahumara is easier for them, they know the alphabet and they can already read, and in Spanish it's more difficult, because the alphabet is larger ... They already learned Tarahumara in their homes. They already know it, and I don't think that they'll lose it, unless they want to lose it.

If, for example, I speak in Tarahumara and I write in Tarahumara, for me as a teacher, it is useful when I teach, but for a person who leaves his community and works in construction it's not.

It is also important to note that the teachers thought that the fact that the PEBB program was limited to the primary schools made literacy in the indigenous language a worthless effort. They presented the question: What was the point of developing literacy in the native tongue, when Tarahumara students went from the community primary school to immersion in a mestizo Spanish-only middle school, high school and then university? In the end, literacy in the native language was not viewed as being functionally justified. It was an effort that did not lead to any visible and practical benefit.

Classroom language practice

Even though teachers planned Spanish-only literacy in their classes, at the same time they considered the ability to speak Tarahumara as a necessary instrument for teaching the children in Mawichi. According to the kindergarten teachers, the majority of the children arrived at school as monolingual speakers of Tarahumara and only learned a very basic vocabulary in kindergarten, entering first grade ill-equipped for the Spanish-only national textbooks and curriculum. Also untrained in teaching Spanish as a second language, and using the

national curriculum since the first class, the non-Tarahumara-speaking teachers found teaching Spanish literacy in the lower grades a strenuous and unenviable challenge. For these reasons, the Tarahumara speaking teachers were expected to teach the first and second grades, whereas the monolingual Spanish-speaking teachers strove to work with the fourth to sixth grades.

In 1998-99, the three fluent bilingual teachers placed in the lower grades were actually using Tarahumara in class for instructional purposes. The three teachers said that they employed Tarahumara for the same purposes: making sure that the national textbooks and the relative activities were understood, covered, and mastered. Tarahumara was used as an "apoyo" (support) for teaching Spanish reading and writing, and as a tool for transitioning the children from their indigenous mother tongue to Spanish.

One of the first grade teachers indicated that the extent of his use of the indigenous language depended on the children's communicative skills in Spanish: the lower their competence in Spanish, the more Tarahumara he used. He wanted to make sure that the children understood the tasks and the feedback. When he spoke to the entire class, he employed the indigenous language only for translating the class content, which was always related to the national textbook. He also used Tarahumara for classroom management. However, in the whole-class context, he did not feel comfortable with using much Tarahumara, because of the presence of a minority of monolingual Spanish speaking children "who wouldn't understand."

In terms of literacy in the native language, the teacher did not express a rejection of the idea, but discomfort at the idea of experimenting with something that no other teacher was undertaking. In the end, he was not sure that bilingual literacy was a practical option. He presented these questions: What if the children liked to read and write in their native language because it was easier and neglected Spanish? How could he teach Tarahumara and in Tarahumara if he had monolingual Spanish-speaking children in the class?

The other first grade teacher noted as well that most of his children started school with little or no Spanish. For this reason, he needed to use Tarahumara to ensure their comprehension of the class. Toward the end of the school year, he said that he was using less Tarahumara with the children in respect to the first months, due to the fact that they had already acquired enough Spanish competence to understand his instructions and content in Spanish. He explained: "I use Tarahumara when I see that the child doesn't understand, and I explain in Tarahumara so more or less he can understand the class. This is if the child is monolingual. As for the bilingual children it's easier." For this teacher as well, then, the preoccupation was to expose children to as much

Spanish as possible, as soon as they showed a minimum of Spanish competence.

CET training program

The CET's officers were aware of the lack of implementation of the bilingual-bicultural program. In general, officers said that one of the main problems at the base of teachers' disregard of the program had been the interruption of the CET teacher training program in the last administration, which had lost the vision of the original creators of the PEBB. In 1998, the new political changes gave CET a new direction, which reestablished a link with the original purpose of the program. The current director of the OEEE said that:

[Tarahumara] children typically learn to read in third or fourth grade, but when we started the [bilingual-bicultural] model, children were already reading in second grade. Therefore, the model gave up good hopes that the children would better use the time, the contents, and the activities at the level of an urban kid. But unfortunately, because of the political changes, and the change of the office chiefs, and the change of ideas, they fell through in 1994-1995. They terminated the training course for teachers on the program, and for four years the training had no continuation and the enthusiasm that brings action was lost, and the teachers were driven away ... we are one of the three states in the republic that has a bilingual program and we are the ones that have obtained a little success ... therefore we'll keep pushing so that the bilingual model will be revived again.

The CET maintained that the teachers needed to be trained appropriately. To this end, during the summer of 1999, the CET restored the month-long summer course for kindergarten, first and second grade teachers serving the Tarahumara schools. At the same time, it re-named the standardized Tarahumara as *Tarahumara escrito* (written Tarahumara), in an attempt to emphasize that the teaching and learning of the standard Tarahumara was not in competition with the spoken language. Through this, the CET hoped to modify the teachers' and community's attitudes.

According to the director of the OEEE in 1999, another issue interfering with the implementation of the PEBB was that "the CET is not an *organismo rector* (governing organism) [but] a research institution which makes proposals to other agencies." The PEBB was developed on the basis of the needs assessment of 1989 and was yearly funded by the state and federal governments, which fulfilled the guidelines of the *Ley General de Educación* (1993). However, this did not imply that the program was mandated in place of the national curriculum. The federal government kept providing all the Tarahumara schools with free national textbooks, along with the training for the implementation of the national curriculum to the teachers serving the

Tarahumara schools. In this way, the state and federal branches sent mixed messages to the teachers and did not offer a coherent and coordinated training direction. In the end, teachers could virtually choose one program or the other, depending solely on their disposition.

In addition, the CET officials did not have any input in the recruitment policy of bilingual teachers, which was regulated by a centralized *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP), as well as a powerful teacher union. As a result, many of the teachers recruited were monolingual Spanish-speaking mestizos, as well as ethnic Tarahumara teachers who did not speak their indigenous language well enough to be able to implement the bilingual program.

Summary and Conclusion

The trend which sees national language policy for indigenous languages in countries such as Mexico has recently shifted to elevating their prior status of languages to be eradicated - considered socially divisive and inadequate as modern means of communication - to languages important to the national cultural inheritance and considered viable means of communication and instruction among their community of speakers. In this perspective, the current language and bilingual education policy in Chihuahua can be viewed as an effort of the state education agencies toward a functional re-allocation (Cooper, 1989) of the Tarahumara language to the written code, as a way to reverse native language shift toward Spanish and reinforce ethnic identity of the speakers. As in other parts of Mexico (Chiodi, 1993; Cerron-Palomino & Lopez, 1990), the bilingual-bicultural education efforts are finding innumerable obstacles in achieving visible changes of the actual language contact situations in the Sierra Tarahumara.

Specifically in the Tarahumara community studied, the state and national discourse around the use of Tarahumara literacy as a preservation device has been theoretically accepted by parents and teachers. However, paradoxically, the fact that the Tarahumara language still holds a dominant communicative function within the family and the community seems to play an important role in the downgrading such a language refunctionalization. In general, Tello (1994) observed in her study of Tarahumara education, that only in "cases of communities where the shift of the indigenous language follows an accelerated process, parents have solicited courses of Tarahumara language for which bilingual teachers have made an effort to systematize the teaching of the Tarahumara" (p. 171).

In the case of communities like Mawichi, which are increasingly basing their economy on the relationship with the Spanish-speaking society, and where the intergenerational transmission of the indigenous language is still strong, the indigenous language maintenance

discourse proposed by the educational and political institutions should be complemented by the inclusion of the wider benefits of bilingual education for an effective educational practice in both languages.

While the PEBB's original proposal, beyond the federal rhetoric, was also created on the basis of the inefficiency of the Spanish-only national curriculum, and spoke of the advantages of biliteracy for the wider cognitive and academic development of Tarahumara students (with the collateral reinforcement of the sense of the native language and ethnic identity), the CET's and UPN's teacher education programs for teachers of Tarahumara children have left aside such fundamental components. On one side, the CET has mainly focused on promoting its textbooks and standardized language among teachers and parents; on the other, the UPN has tried to reinforce the sense of ethnic identity of the Tarahumara teachers, also providing them for the first time with sound pedagogical training. However, in light of the limited success of the current Spanish-only literacy practices and the disregard of the maintenance bilingual-bicultural program, these agencies should devote more emphasis and teacher education programs on how bilingual education could benefit the Tarahumara learners on a wider educational scale. In this way, the political and ideological purpose of the PEBB could be complemented by an intent which is more directly relevant to the teaching and learning difficulties still encountered by Tarahumara teachers and students.

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Map 1. Variants of the Tarahumara language



From CET. (1997). *Compendio básico de la gramática rarámuli*. Chihuahua, Mexico.

The Prospect of Indigenous Language Instruction in Taiwan – By Looking at a Successful American Indian community school

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Abstract

According to Lee (1994), Taiwan originally had over twenty ethnicities and languages. However, at least half of them have disappeared. Taiwanese indigenous languages especially have been threatened by extinction. Taiwanese indigenous languages start to lose speakers from among the tribal people who are less than fifty years old. Young children who are below junior high school age cannot speak their native languages. Only 9% of Taiwanese indigenous children can speak indigenous languages fluently (United Daily News, 1999). Thus, the loss of indigenous languages is becoming a serious crisis in Taiwan. Fortunately, indigenous language teaching has been implemented in Taiwan for almost ten years. How has it worked in the aspects of the teacher, the curriculum, the funds, and the community involvement? What are the problems and the prospects of indigenous language teaching in Taiwan?

This paper examines the current situation of indigenous languages in Taiwan. It explores the implementation of indigenous language instruction. In addition, one American Indian experience, that of the Navajo, is compared to the Taiwanese indigenous experience in order to search for a new direction for indigenous language instruction.

Taiwanese indigenes were the "original inhabitants"¹ living in Taiwan around six thousand years ago (The Association of Native Peoples' Education in Taiwan, 1999). They belong to the Austronesian racial group². Taiwanese indigenes were divided into two groups: the "Mountain group" and the "Plain group". This study only investigates the "Mountain group". The "Mountain group" is officially categorized into nine groups: Saisiyat, Yami, Tsou, Rukai, Puyuma, Bunun, Atayal, Paiwan, and Tao. The total population of Taiwanese indigenes is about 360,000 to 370,000 people, which is proximately 2% of the total population of the people living in Taiwan now. Most Taiwanese indigenes live in the mountain areas except Tao and Puyuma. Taiwanese indigenes survive in their societies by hunting and agriculture for a long, long time. However, the Japanese, the Chinese and other colonizers immigrated and governed Taiwan for over

four hundred years. The world of Taiwanese indigenes was thus destroyed, occupied, and assimilated.

According to Lee (1994), Taiwan originally had over twenty ethnicities and languages. However, half of the languages have disappeared. Another half is nearly extinct. Lu (1996), Wang (1999), Wang & Pu (1995), Soong (1995), Hsieh (1998) and Lai (1995) indicate that indigenous language loss in Taiwan began with the people below fifty years old. The people below twenty years old, especially the urban indigenous adults and children, are the most affected. In the cities, the young children from preschool to junior high school cannot speak their native language. They use Mandarin³ to communicate to each other. A recent survey (United Daily News, 1999) proves that only 9% of Taiwanese indigenous children can speak fluent indigenous languages. Huang (1993) also estimates that the population of fluent indigenous language speakers will be only 0.6 percent after five centuries. If the Taiwanese indigenes intermarry with other ethnic groups, indigenous language will probably die in the next two or three generations. Thus, Taiwanese indigenous language can be categorized as the "threatened language" by using Fishman's (1991) the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale: young children are and will no longer speak their native language.

Indigenous language loss in Taiwan is mainly caused by assimilation policies of the Japanese colony and Mandarin assimilation policies of the Kuo-Min-Tang (KMT) government⁴. These policies successfully and pervasively made every citizen speak Japanese and Mandarin fluently at separate times. There are several other reasons for language loss including teaching Mandarin only in school, not teaching native language by parents at home, the influence of media, migrating to the urban cities, intermarriage and living with other ethnicities, and not recognizing the importance of native language by tribal people (Lu, 1996; Wang, 1999; Wang & Pu, 1995; Soong, 1995; Lin, 1995; Lai, 1995).

The purpose of this paper is to compare indigenous language instruction between a Navajo community school and Taiwanese tribal school in order to search for a new

¹ *Original inhabitant* is the term that represents Taiwanese indigene.

² The Austronesian racial group includes the area from Taiwan in the north to New Zealand in the south; Easter Island in the East to Madagascar in the West (The Association of Native Peoples' Education in Taiwan, 1999).

³ Mandarin is the only official language in Taiwan.

⁴ Kuo-Min-Tang (KMT) government is the nationalist party in Taiwan.

direction for indigenous language instruction. In understanding indigenous language instruction in Taiwan, the studies of Lu (1996), Wang (1999), Wang & Pu (1995), Soong (1995), Hsieh (1998), Chen (1999) and Lai (1995) as well as information gained through two field trips and seven telephone interviews will be used to demonstrate indigenous language instruction in Taiwan.

Indigenous Language Instruction in Taiwan

Under the "Developing and Improving Taiwanese Indigenous Education for Five-Year Plan" and the plan of "Education Priority Area," indigenous language instruction began to be implemented at Wulai Junior High & Primary school in Taipei County in 1990. Other counties and cities, such as Yilan County, Taoyuen County and Hsinchu County followed. The major goal of native language instruction is to rehabilitate the native languages. In 1993, the Department of Education announced the inclusion of "Hsiangtu⁵ Instructional Activities" in the Elementary Curriculum Standards. Within the curriculum standards, hsiangtu instructional activity including native language instruction is treated as a subject and is taught to the third to sixth graders for forty minutes each week in the extracurricular activity class. In 1996, hsiangtu curriculum was officially adopted. It mainly focused on native language education. The Department of Education then announced that native languages including Holo, Hakka and indigenous languages would be the required course for primary students to take in 2001. In the following sections, the elements of the teacher, teaching materials, curriculum and instruction, the funds, and community involvement in Taiwanese tribal schools will be demonstrated.

Teacher

The local indigenous teachers play the major role in indigenous language instruction. Besides the local teachers, indigenous staff, priests, ministers, parents, the elders, other local people and non-native people also serve as the teachers or substitute teachers in indigenous language classrooms.

Teaching materials

Indigenous language teaching materials are separately made by the teacher, the linguist, the priest and/or the minister, each school, each county government or Department of Education. In addition, the pronunciation system of the materials uses the Mandarin system, then a combination of Mandarin and Romanization pronunciation. Lee's "The Linguistic System of Taiwanese Austronesian Language" is pervasively used nowadays. Moreover, the content of the materials mainly focuses on oral conversation including vocabularies, pronunciation practice, grammar practice, tone practice, oral practice, supplementary materials, cultural components, real-life photos, traditional

customs, folktales, traditional songs, etc. (Wu-Lai Junior High School & Primary School, 1991; Huang, 1992; Department of Education, 1997; Pingtung County Government, 1993a, 1993b; Truku Language Editing Committee of Hualien County, 1994). The content of the materials also emphasizes real-life experience, indigenization, and enjoyment. It aims to use practical conversation to promote the local cultures. It also aims to be more meaningful, interesting and appropriate in order for the children to learn happily (Pingtung County Government, 1993a, 1993b).

Curriculum and Instruction

Overall, each school uses native language materials to be the major materials. Teachers also collect some related cultural and ethnic information, such as children's songs and folktales, etc. to make the curriculum more solid and interesting. Taking the example of Wulai Junior High & Elementary School, the instruction mainly emphasizes the understanding and practice of pronunciation and drill practice. It also incorporates the subject matters such as music, arts, social studies, science and large group activity into the curriculum. Moreover, it includes pictures, cassette tapes, videotapes, slides, field trips, drama performance, storytelling, etc. to make the instruction more meaningful, interesting and vivid in order to promote the student's learning motivation. Taking another example from Wenle Elementary School, the curriculum mainly focuses on teaching the traditional songs and traditional arts and crafts. The teacher tries to incorporate the Paiwan language and culture into the instruction in order for the students to learn the traditional customs.

Funding

Most programs of indigenous language instruction are funded under the "Developing and Improving Taiwanese Indigenous Education for Five-Year Plan" and the plan of "Education Priority Area". On April 31, 1993, the Provincial Bureau of Education funded two hundred thousands dollars for indigenous language instruction (Chen, 1995). According to Soong (1995), Wulai Junior High & Elementary School has twenty thousands dollars for native language instruction each year. Other schools also get some funds from the Bureau of Education, County government, The Council of Aboriginal Affairs, Executive Yuan and the Department of Education. However, the funds are always not enough.

Community Involvement

The interaction between the community and the school varied. Every tribal town takes turns to host an "Instruction Observation Day" for the teachers, the parents, community members and the experts to see how each school implements its native language instruction and also to interact with each other. One school also uses "Parent Meetings" to advocate the importance of speaking native language and to encourage the parents to do it at home. Additionally, some communities host cultural events. Moreover, some conduct parent education for the parents and community members to have more contacts with each other. Taking an example from Wenle

⁵ Hsiangtu literally refers to one's hometown or native place.

Elementary School, the school conducts a class to teach the tribal people about the history and the customs on Tuesday and Thursday nights. This class also teaches other curricula, such as international pronunciation, parent education, technology, etc. Furthermore, the elders, the most valuable teachers, frequently solve the teachers' problems in teaching or in collecting tribal related information. Soong (1995) indicates that the parents in Wulai town's helps to edit the teaching materials, to teach the language class, to consult in a language contest and to donate the traditional equipment to the local museum. Wulai town also conducts an "Indigenous Teacher's Workshop for Designing Hsiangtu Materials for Five Counties".

In the next part, a particular Navajo Community School that I was observing will be described. The real name of the school and the related references will omitted, in consideration for that school.

Navajo Community School

The Navajo Community School is located on the Navajo Reservation in northeastern Arizona. The Navajo Demonstration School is the first school operated by a locally elected, all-Indian governing school board. It is also the first school in incorporating the native language and culture in its curriculum and instruction. Its goal is to implement the Diné philosophy of learning in order to enhance young children's learning in all areas. Its major aim is bilingual-bicultural education, a transitional bilingual education. Its philosophy is to have the privilege and the capability in leading and providing leadership to educate young children. In the following sections, the elements of the teacher, the teaching materials, curriculum and instruction, the funds, and community involvement in such school will be addressed.

Teacher

Native teachers, teacher assistant, one foster grandma, several AmeriCorp workers⁶, and some parent helpers and one non-native English-as-Second-Language teacher are the major staffs teaching in the Navajo elementary school. That is, the majority of the staffs are Diné.

Teaching Material

The Navajo Studies and Curriculum Center and the teachers mainly make Navajo language and culture materials. The Curriculum Center designs and owns a lot of curriculum materials on the subjects of Navajo history, science, math, language arts, Navajo coal, forest, farming, plants, basket, Native American studies, The English-Navajo Children's Picture Dictionary, etc. The Center also designs the "Navajo Scope and Sequence" to serve as a guide for teaching Navajo language and culture across the Navajo Nation. On the other hand, classroom teachers

make their own bilingual/bicultural materials for the needs of their own classrooms. They generate a small but growing collection of Navajo literature from their own life experience and also from their parents and elders.

Curriculum and Instruction

In this part, two significant classrooms, the kindergarten and the Navajo Studies classroom, will be illustrated.

The kindergarten classroom is organized around learning centers, small-group instruction, and several large group activities. For the small-group activities, the children rotate to each center (e.g., writing, science, math, and art areas) to do their works with different adults. For the large group activities, they gather in the Hogan⁷ and do the morning prayer ("like talking to the Holy People"), greetings, morning messages (e.g., calendar and weather chart), and sing flag songs and other children's songs accompanied with the drums, etc. Teacher- and student-developed thematic units are also incorporated into the curriculum. For example, the themes for January are "Snow man," "Martin Luther King," and "Snow Falling." The themes for December are "Christmas," "Coyote," and "Blowing Wind." The content area centers on these themes that are meaningful to the students and relevant to important events and activities within Navajo culture.

In Navajo Studies classroom, teacher B mostly speaks Navajo to the students. She teaches the lower grades about the vocabulary, the body parts, months, four seasons, colors, numbers, comparative words, the alphabet, shapes and songs. She also teaches the students about the history, the meanings of each month of Navajo life, the legends of White Shell Woman, Spider Woman, Changing Woman, and The Talking God, and the stories about coyote. She reads the Navajo books and *Navajo Culture Today*⁸ to the students as well. She even teaches them Navajo arts and crafts, such as making the loom and playing Navajo games including the string game, shoe game, and stick game. Furthermore, the students have the opportunities to take a nature walk to collect the native plants and make their own plant book.

Funds

Several short-term and long-term funds supported the programs and the projects at the Navajo Demonstration School when the school began. There are Demonstration in Navajo Education (DINE, Inc.), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, Title IV, and Title VII bilingual program of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. Currently, "Title VII and an intensive ESEA still support bilingual/bicultural curriculum", said by the principal.

⁷ Hogan means home in Navajo language.

⁸ *Navajo Culture Today*, a monthly newsletter, is published by the Navajo Community School. It is a good resource for material about Navajo culture.

⁶ AmeriCorp workers are people who work with the students in the areas of reading, writing, and spelling. They help in the classrooms and also at the dormitory.

Community Involvement

Community members also get involved in the children's education in this school. One elder, a "foster grandma", serves as an assistant and a role model in speaking Navajo in one kindergarten classroom. The Navajo Traditional Day⁹ also serves as an excellent example of community involvement next. Mr. M and Mrs. R (Two elders) talked to the students about Navajo roles and the History of Navajo Clans. In another morning, Mr. M and Mrs. R and other teachers and staff even made a traditional feast as a real life lesson by butchering a sheep, peeling its skin, taking out the organs, roasting its ribs, making it into the stew, etc. Students were also delighted to help to butcher the sheep and make their own fry bread. Moreover, community members had their hair in a bun, wore their traditional outfits and participated in each event on the traditional Day.

Comparison

The Navajo Community School and the tribal elementary schools in Taiwan have common goals, common program components and common problems. The common goal for both settings is to revitalize or rejuvenate their endangered languages that are no longer spoken by their younger generations. The common components include community involvement, parental support, government support, teacher/staff development and material development. These components and associated problems are discussed below.

Community Involvement is a common component in both places. The cultural connection cannot be made to the language without those who know the culture best (Stiles, 1997). Particularly, the elders who are still fluent are "inextricably associated, intimately tied" to the culture (Fishman, 1987, p.12). This connection is important. Community is also important to insure the transmission of societal foundations to future generation. According to Harris (1994), "Hopefully students will see themselves as aboriginal people with bicultural skills - having a strengthening and primary Aboriginal identity, but competent and confident in two social worlds". However, there are still some difficulties in community involvement while initiating indigenous language teaching in Taiwan. Within communities, the tribal members only use native language in some gatherings such as ceremonial and church gatherings.

Parental support is another common component in both settings. The support of the parents in the home is the most important element for these two programs. The language learned at school must be reinforced at home in order for true bilingualism to occur in indigenous languages (Stiles, 1997). "Everyday use of language in a wider range of contexts provides language with its life blood through a self-generating process - the more people

hear and use the language, the more fluent and confident in language use they become" (Schmidt, 1990, p.56). Parental support in these two settings has extended to language classes, in-service training, classroom participation, development of resources, and certification of teachers (in the Navajo Community School). However, there are still some parents who do not recognize the importance of speaking native language because they think it is not useful in mainstream society. They do not teach their children the mother tongues because they think it is not good for their children. Additionally, some parents cannot teach the mother tongues because they do not speak their native language fluently.

Government support is the other common component in both places. Government support, especially the financial support plays an important role in implementing native language and/or bilingual/bicultural instruction. Both programs had the support in initiating many related programs and projects, such as material and staff development, etc. However, inconsistent funding caused several great projects and/or programs to be terminated and also negatively affected program development.

Teacher/Staff development is another component in implementing the indigenous language programs. Both schools include in-services, workshops, conferences (in Taiwan), instruction observation day (in Taiwan), teacher-researcher study group (in the Navajo community school). Navajo even provided on-site summer programs that enable the teachers and/or staff to create materials and reevaluate curriculum components. However, insufficient teachers is another problem in these programs. This problem can make the students lack interest in learning because of changing teachers, inconsistent teaching methods and content. If the non-native teachers are not familiar with such specific linguistic and cultural groups, it makes the teaching and learning even less effective.

Material development is the last common component incorporated into these two places. Materials are made by the teachers, the community members, the government officials (in Taiwan) and the students (in the Navajo Community School). Those materials, embedded in the indigenous authentic life, are especially meaningful to the children's learning. However, there are not enough good texts in both language groups.

A Problem Unique to the Taiwanese Tribal Schools

The Burden on Students and Teachers is a problem for indigenous language education in Taiwan. A few interviewees felt that it is a huge burden to students in language learning. The students must learn Mandarin, but they need to learn their native language now. From the year 2001, they are required to learn English in a required class. In addition to language learning, they still need to study for the entrance examinations. Are these requirements too much for them? On the other hand, the teachers are beginning to implement a new instruction: Open Education. At the same time, they learn computer skills trying to incorporate the technology into their

⁹ Navajo Traditional Day is a week-long event including various activities: Little Miss Navajo Pageant, mini Pow-Wow, Song & Dance, Navajo Spelling Bee, Talent Show, Horse Show, etc. involving the whole community.

teaching. In addition, they always share the administrative tasks in schools. In 2001, they might need to teach English by themselves if there are not enough English teachers. How can the teachers teach indigenous language fully and effectively with their hands so full of work?

A Problem Unique to the Navajo Community School

Stanford 9 Standardized Test is the biggest controversial issue happening at the Navajo Elementary School. There was a pre-test (9/27-9/30, 1999) and a post-test (3/20-3/23, 2000) for the students from pre-k to grade six. Most teachers teach every subject in English in order for the students to reach the standard. One teacher said that, "I would like to teach nothing but Navajo language and culture". Another teacher said that, "Teachers are suppose to teach Navajo language and culture in this level (kindergarten)... Because of standardized test, we need to turn everything all around in English... We are stuck in the middle..." However, another kindergarten teacher and the third grade teacher did their best to teach Navajo language and culture, and, only when it was the time for the standardized test, did they change their curriculum into English. This kindergarten class still had a positive outcome (0.4 or 0.5 score higher) for the pre-test. Overall, it is obvious that the teachers at the Navajo Elementary School are struggling to balance the Navajo and English curriculum. This is indeed a difficult task for each teacher to do. This is also a key as to whether or not the Navajo language and culture will be preserved.

Recommendations

It is not fair to compare two language renewal cases from two settings that are historically, linguistically, and culturally so different. Also, the Navajo Community School has implemented the bilingual/bicultural instruction several decades ahead of Taiwan. The major purpose of this study is to learn and apply some outstanding components from the Navajo model program to Taiwan's programs. Some recommendations from this study will be indicated below.

Native language learning must begin with early childhood education. The Navajo Community School implements native language teaching from the kindergarten level. Other successful language renewal programs such as the Te Kohanga Reo in New Zealand, and the Punana Leo in Hawai'i also do that in the similar fashion. The Te Kohanga Reo and the Punana Leo implemented native language immersion programs in order for their preschoolers to be saturated in a home-like environment to successfully learn their native languages. Much research also indicates the tremendous positive outcomes of native language teaching. Native language learning not only improves a child's language, cognitive, academic and social development, but also reinforces his/her cultural identity and enhances his/her self-esteem and decreases the dropout rates (Cummins, 1992; Crawford, 1989; Brandt, 1988). Additionally, the skills

learned in the first language can easily transfer to the second language (Cummins, 1992). Thus, native language education in Taiwan must begin with early childhood education.

Local control is the major reason to the success of the Navajo Community School. Local control not only improves the local economy in the area around the Navajo Community School, but also refines the local people's leadership and bureaucratic skills in operating the school. Thus, Taiwanese indigenous education must take control of educational policy, administrative management, teacher development and hiring, curriculum and instruction, content of textbook, funding resources, etc. We can thus take ownership over our children's education. Moreover, if the school can use native language at every level of the school, it will further influence the community life and family life and make the whole environment bilingual/bicultural. This is a long-term goal for any indigenous language program.

Teacher/Staff development is the important essence Taiwan's program needs to learn from the Navajo Community School. In that School, regular in-service training, on-site undergraduate and graduate classes, language and culture workshops and conferences, and summer classes provide the outstanding opportunities to enrich the teachers and the staff in learning and teaching about Navajo language and culture and also bilingual/bicultural education. They also help the Navajo teachers, teacher assistants, and other adults to pursue higher degrees in varied fields and to work toward certification in order to afford the means for long-term and systematic school change. Taiwan's programs must work toward these endeavors.

Conclusion

Native language teaching from early childhood, local control and teacher/staff development are three important elements for Taiwanese indigenous language education to consider, plan and implement. Community involvement and parental support are two other components Taiwanese programs must work in greater depth. The Navajo Community School serves as an outstanding program for us and other indigenous language renewal programs to learn from and adopt.

It cannot, however, totally transfer to Taiwan's case because there are so many differences in two distinct populations historically, linguistically, culturally, politically, etc. Taiwanese indigenous instruction is not looking to be a successful indigenous "model." Our goal is to preserve and revitalize our ancient language and culture to pass it down to as many generations as possible.

To do this, home, school, and community need to work as a partnership to make our life and community the way it used to be - an indigenous way of life. We need to include all profound program components from successful

indigenous language programs and solve the problems we have.

More importantly, the government and the Council of Aboriginal Affairs need to work with tribal members to modify and legitimize the language policy, to legitimize the self-determination of indigenous education and culture in order for us to reach our goals.

Finally, tribal communities and the mainstream society both need to work to become a bilingual/bicultural or even a multilingual/multicultural world. Once we are a multicultural society, all ethnic groups will reach the goal of living peacefully with each other and working for our prospective future.

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All Literate and Nothing to Read: The Problem of a Lack of Written Literature in Rotuman

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Abstract

Rotuman is an Eastern Oceanic language spoken on Rotuma, an outlier island of the Fiji Islands. The Rotuman language has approximately 9,000 speakers, only 2,500 of whom live on Rotuma. The history of literacy in the language is an interesting one. At one time Methodists and Roman Catholics wrote all lexical words differently, the former writing them only in the "long" form, the latter writing them only in the "short" form. Maxwell Churchward brought an end to that chaos in 1928 with his orthography, in which words are written as they are spoken, long or short. All education on the island after grade 3 is in English, though Rotuman is the exclusive language of the home and church. The literacy rate is high, perhaps near 85%. One of the main threats to the language is the fact that, apart from a recently completed Rotuman Bible, there is virtually no written material in Rotuman. In spite of its long written tradition, then, it remains an oral language. This paper examines this threat, from both a historical and a cultural point of view, and suggests that one of the most proactive steps toward language maintenance that the people could take would be to initiate some sort of vernacular literature program.

Introduction

The South Pacific is dotted with tiny islands with small populations. In this age of globalization, the languages of this area can all be considered threatened, primarily by world languages and by national languages. This article describes one of these languages, Rotuman, spoken on an outlier island in the Fiji Islands, and discusses the role that literacy is playing in its endangered situation. Two literacy-related factors in particular, an over-specified orthography and the lack of vernacular reading materials, are focused upon here.

Rotuma, Rotumans, and Rotuman

The island of Rotuma is 43 square kilometers in area, lying 465 km. northwest of Viti Levu in Fiji, at 12 degrees south latitude and 177 degrees east longitude, at the crossroads of the cultural areas of Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. The island was first "discovered" by Europeans when the H.M.S. *Pandora* landed in 1791, looking for mutineers from the *Bounty*. It was ceded by Great Britain to Fiji in 1881, and has been administered by Fiji ever since.

The Rotuman people are Polynesian in both culture and physical characteristics, in contrast to the mostly Melanesian Fijians, with skin color and body type similar to, though smaller than, that of Tongans and Samoans.

The Rotuman language is spoken by approximately 9,000 speakers (Grimes, 1999), only 2,500 of whom live on the ancestral island; the remaining 6,500 live in several communities of Fiji or scattered overseas. The Rotuman population has decreased from its peak of 3,235 in 1966 (Howard and Rensel, 1994).

The language belongs to the Eastern Oceanic subgroup of the Austronesian family, along with Fijian and the Polynesian languages. Although in the distant past it borrowed heavily from Samoan and Tongan, it is not closely related to any language, and has some unique structural characteristics.

The History of Literacy on Rotuma

The history of literacy in Rotuma is a rather checkered one. It had no indigenous writing system when missionaries first arrived in 1839. Early missionaries from both the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches introduced orthographies. Although they used more or less the same symbols to represent the sounds of the language (both failed to use a symbol to represent the glottal stop), they made very different decisions as to how to write Rotuman words. All Rotuman lexical words have two forms, one derived from the other by one of four rules, the choice of form depending on the word's semantico-syntactic context. For instance, the citation form of the word meaning 'flower' is *hosa*. This is termed the 'complete' or 'long' form. But in non-final contexts, such as when followed by a modifier, the metathesized form *hoas* (the 'incomplete' or 'short' form) occurs instead. The Catholics wrote the word as *hoas* in all its occurrences, even when pronounced as [hosa], while the Methodists wrote the word as *hosa* in all its occurrences, even when pronounced as [hoas]. This chaos was finally brought to an end in 1928 by Maxwell Churchward, a Methodist with linguistic understanding, who judged that words should be written as they were spoken. So *hosa* and

hoas are each written representations of the lexeme for 'flower'. His is the official orthography, though the other, older systems have never disappeared from use.

This decision, though, which on the one hand appeared to simplify things, on another actually complicated the orthography. This is because the derived forms of some words have vowels that the citation forms do not. Further, the conditioning environment for the altered vowels is lost when the derived word is formed. For example, *mose* means 'sleep'. Its derived form involves umlauting of the *o* and deletion of the final vowel, yielding *mös* (written as *mös*). In citation forms, there are only 5 contrasting vowels, while in the corresponding short forms there are 10. So if words are to be written unambiguously, symbols are needed for 10 vowels, not to mention 5 long vowels. Churchward's system uses 10 short vowel symbols (*a*, *ä* ([æ]), *å* ([ɛ]), *ä* ([ɔ]), *e*, *i*, *ö* ([ø]), *u*, and *ü* ([y]), and the macron over the vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* to show length.

Although an agreement was made in 1964 that the standard spelling to be used in writing Rotuman would be Churchward's, most Catholics still cling to their own way. But even many Methodists do not use the diacritics when they write the language. For a native speaker, a word written as *hak* in isolation, without diacritics, is ambiguous between the word meaning 'four' (pronounced [hæk]) and written *hāk* in the orthography, derived from *hāke*) and the word meaning 'to climb' (pronounced [hak]) and written *hak* in the orthography, derived from *hako*), but context would most certainly make the intended meaning clear, much as the orthographic word *bear* in English is never confusing for the native speaker when used in context. This indicates that the orthography is over-specified for the native user, though the details are useful for expatriate readers and writers. This tendency to cater to outsiders will be seen again when we look at Rotuman literature.

Educational Policies

English, Fijian, and Hindi all have de facto official status in Fiji, though the constitution specifies no official language. English is the language of government, print media, broadcast media, and education, as well as the lingua franca between ethnic groups. In 1926 a policy was established to use English as the medium of instruction throughout the country after the first 3 years of primary school. Until then the vernacular is used. After the third year the vernacular becomes an object of study and its use is banned outside of this one class. This transitional bilingual program is in effect in Rotuma. There are four primary schools and one high school, which goes through Form IV (grade 10), on the island. In addition, students receive instruction on Rotuman customs one hour per week.

The literacy rate among Rotumans is high. Chandra and Mason (1998) report that 426 people (approximately 15%)

on Rotuma have "no education". That would suggest a maximum literacy rate of 85%, though the actual rate is likely to be slightly lower, perhaps 80% (Elizabeth Inia, personal communication). This would be the rate in Rotuman literacy; the rate in English would clearly be lower, as not everyone continues past grade 3.

Overall mastery of English on the island is difficult to gauge. Alan Howard (personal communication) claims that, in the 40+ years he has been visiting Rotuma, English proficiency has increased. But it is rarely used outside of the school, except by young people who wish to show their sophistication and desire to communicate with each other in a way that their parents won't understand. A young person who is planning to leave the island for Fiji or abroad is also likely to practice speaking English, since Rotuman is used a great deal less in overseas Rotuman communities, even in such communities in Fiji.

Rotuman Literature

Churchward produced several publications on the Rotuman language, which still stand as the standard works about and in the language: *Rotuman Grammar and Dictionary* (1940), the latter part consisting of approximately 5,000 entries with English definitions; *Tales of a Lonely Island* (1939, reprinted in 1995), a collection of Rotuman folktales in Rotuman and English; the New Testament plus 8 books of the Old Testament completed before his death, and published in a single volume (1930); a Rotuman hymnal (1929, revised in 1989). Not until 1999 did the full Rotuman Bible appear.

Secular, non-linguistic, materials have been largely ignored until just recently. The Rotuma website lists 28 vernacular items in its bibliography. Only five were published since 1988; all the rest are 60 years old or more. The newer ones include a book of proverbs, *Fdeag 'Es Fuaga* (1998), with English explanations of the proverbs, and a reverse (English-Rotuman) dictionary (1998), to complement Churchward's Rotuman-English dictionary. A few pamphlets, such as one on mat weaving, have been put out by the University of the South Pacific.

In their homes most Methodists would have a copy of the Rotuman Bible (one version, or both) and a hymnbook, but probably no other reading material in their language. Roman Catholics would probably not have the hymnbook, since it is a Methodist publication. The *Grammar and Dictionary* was written for linguists (and is difficult to read even by them!) and others interested in the language, but not for native speakers. The folktale collection has been reprinted for the benefit of the Rotuman people, but is really not available to those on the island.

There are no doubt several factors which account for this paucity of vernacular literacy. One thing it is not is a lack

of intelligence, education, skill, or drive. Howard (1970) has pointed out over and over that Rotumans overseas, both in Fiji and in foreign countries, fare much better socially and economically than do other Pacific Islanders. In Fiji they hold many more leadership positions in government and industry than their small numbers would predict.

Then what is it? I would suggest there are five key factors here. One is economic. Most Rotumans are subsistence farmers, harvesting coconuts, taro, yams, cassava, oranges, and much more from very fertile volcanic soil. Various small-scale industries have been tried from time to time, but all have failed, largely because of poor sea transportation with Fiji. Copra is dried on the island before being shipped out, and that provides the greatest source of revenue, other than the money remitted by overseas Rotumans. This means that there is little cash available for purchasing books or written materials of any kind.

A second factor is a social one. If a young person wants to get an education beyond Form 4, or wants to seek employment, she or he must leave Rotuma, for Fiji or elsewhere. Thus, that segment of the Rotuman population which is most educated, most ambitious, most likely to be active readers, does not stay on the island. Some return following their education, but most do not. They instead become contributors to their home island's betterment through their remittances.

A third factor is political. Rotumans are represented in the Fiji legislature by one senator and one member of Parliament. The people do not have enough numbers or enough political clout to attract the attention of the national leaders. Consequently, their needs go unmet—both needs for infrastructure such as roads, as well as needs for education. A set of six Rotuman language readers to be used in school has been prepared, but only Readers 1 and 2 have been printed; the remaining manuscripts languish in some government office, due to insufficient funds in the Curriculum Development Unit in Suva.

A fourth factor is technological. Modern technology and the island of Rotuma have not yet met. There is no constant supply of electrical power, though some homes have generators, which are used primarily to provide lighting in the evening. There is a Rotuman language program on the radio in Fiji, but few radio receivers in Rotuma, and certainly no TVs. There is no internet access, because there is no server to provide it. Computers cannot be used without electricity. This means that it is not possible to produce vernacular reading materials on the island, even if there were money available to do so, and with slow and inconsistent communication with Fiji, it would be discouraging to send away manuscripts.

Finally, the fifth factor is psychological. Rotumans are people who take a great deal of pride in being Rotumans.

They feel superior to the other groups that make up the ethnic mix in Fiji. Likewise, they are proud of their language; most would consider it to be superior over both Fijian and Hindi, though it does not have the status in the country that they do. Over against English, Rotuman has a sort of complementary relationship—a classic case of diglossia. Rotuman is for chatting about home, the crops, the church, and all of the other everyday functions that language is used for. English is limited, on the island, to two functions: school and writing. As long as this attitude remains, as long as there is what is regarded as a balance between these two linguistic systems, Rotuman is not going to be viewed as a language of literature. And, consequently, vernacular literature will not be produced from within the culture. Only some major upset of this delicately balanced system could bring about a change in attitude that would result in an increase in vernacular literature.

Such an upset is certainly conceivable, given the political events of the last year or so. Over the years, there have been several movements toward independence from Fiji. In late 1999 David Korem, a wealthy American, visited the island with the intention of determining whether it was a suitable location to establish his Dominion of Melchizedek, an "ecclesiastical sovereignty", according to Korem. Apparently favorably impressed, he has since written a constitution for the "Republic of Rotuma". Though most Rotumans are outraged by these actions, he does have his supporters. In early 2000, Henry Gibson, a well-known part-Rotuman martial arts expert, who was once exiled from Fiji, managed to return to the Rotuma, and declare himself *sau*, the word for ancient Rotuman kings. Although he claimed to be there to visit family members, many wonder about his real motives and some speculate that he is involved in the Korem situation. In May of this year the duly elected prime minister of Fiji, of Indian descent, was overthrown and taken hostage in a coup launched by a group of Fijians who were unhappy about having an Indian in that post. Rotuma is not directly involved in those events, but it has certainly been affected by a loss of communication with Fiji, the closing down of schools and universities, and a loss of confidence in government institutions. On July 13 a "Blueprint for the Protection of Fijian & Rotuman Rights and Interests, and the Advancement of Their Development" was presented to the Great Council of Chiefs in Fiji by the Interim Prime Minister, Mr. Laisenia Qarase. Though no more than a plan, and obviously non-binding, it assures that the Rotumans have the blessing of the Fijians in the future of the country.

Another indicator of imminent change was a recent decision made by the Rotuman Council of Chiefs, the main ruling body on the island, to allow limited tourism. This came after years of stern refusal to allow tourists on the island. Though Rotuma will never become another Tahiti or Bali,

this decision does indicate an openness to change as well as a culture willing to compromise its purity in order to earn extra capital. One cannot even speculate how this all might affect the Rotuman people or, secondarily, their language, but it seems safe to say that the status quo is in grave danger.

Prospects for the Future

Dixon (1991:230) pessimistically predicts that only 200 of the 1,980 languages of the Pacific Islands will be spoken in the year 2200. He calls for documentation of these endangered languages, in the form of grammars, dictionaries, and so forth. The demise of the use of many South Pacific languages has been attributed to insufficient vernacular literature. Maori, for one, nearly gave over completely to English, partly because of a want of Maori literature. This shortage of literature became an argument against the formal teaching of Maori (Benton, cited in Mühlhäusler, 1990). The language has been revived in the last few decades, and Maori literature is now being written and read, along with English.

Mühlhäusler (1990) goes on to quote John Lynch (p. 199): "Literates with next to nothing to read soon revert to illiteracy." While a person does not lose his or her ability to read through inactivity, it perhaps does not make much sense to say that that person is "literate" if she/he never reads. Or maybe we need another category when referring to people of the South Pacific and other similar areas—how about quasi-literate?

For some South Pacific languages there is a large body of oral literature which can be converted to written form, thus preserving both the language and the pervading values and metaphors of the culture—in short, its soul. But for others, the availability of oral literature is either lost already or nearly so. That appears to be the case with Rotuman. In 1992 I visited the island armed with a tape recorder, intent on locating native storytellers who could record some of their legends and folktales and other cultural stories for me. But I was told there were no storytellers around anymore.

The prospect is certainly not entirely bleak. One of the most encouraging signs of vitality for the Rotuman language is the fact that a feature film, entitled *Island Dreams*, is going to be made about Rotumans, shot in Rotuma, using Rotuman actors, and in the Rotuman language, with English subtitles. This is the work of Vilsoni Hereniko, a native son, now at the Center for Pacific Island Studies at the University of Hawaii, where he has established a reputation as a playwright. His plays, while about Rotuman themes, have been written in English. This is his first major endeavor in film-making, and the first which has employed the Rotuman language. This entire project has the potential to destroy some of the thinking, referred to earlier, that Rotuman is for everyday things

only, and English is the language of wider communication, used for all important things.

In conclusion, the Rotuman language, unique in so many ways, needs to stick around, in order to increase our understanding of language as well as the interplay of language and culture. It is the Rotuman people, perhaps with the assistance of interested linguists, who alone can make this happen. The drive to create a vernacular literature must come from within. History shows that work done on the language by outsiders has been intended for outsiders (mostly missionaries and linguists), and so has not reached the hands of Rotumans. There is still time to prevent the Rotuman language from being included on the "most endangered languages" list, if the people will just take up the challenge issued here.

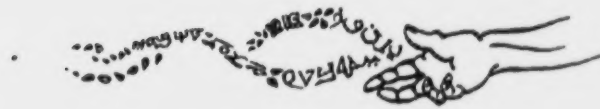
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank two individuals for their assistance in this paper: Elizabeth Inia, who gave me information about the current status of English and Rotuman on Rotuma; and my husband, Jotama Vamarasi, who read and commented on an earlier version of this paper.

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Endangered Languages and Literacy



6

Cautionary Notes

Literacy in Gaulish: a Dying Glimmer

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Abstract

Our current knowledge of literacy in ancient Gaulish is examined. The range of extant inscriptions are reviewed, in three successive but distinct periods, each in a different area and using a different script. It is suggested that Gaulish literacy was always a contact phenomenon, which never developed an autonomous tradition, but always relied on bilinguals applying practices designed for their other language. Ultimately, the acquisition of literacy — significantly never used for literature — made no difference to the decline of Gaulish before the spread of Latin.

Introduction

This paper sets out current knowledge of literacy in one ancient case, that of the Gaulish language, spoken widely in Western Europe until the first century AD. Since the language died out not long after this, without direct descendants, it provides an object lesson in the death of a language despite recent adoption of literacy.

The case confirms an apparent cultural universal, namely that, in the presence of literate neighbours, writing systems are borrowed or adapted rather than created. Gauls used a variety of derivative systems, borrowed from Etruscans (via Lepontic), Greek colonists, and finally Romans, in each case adopting the systems of their neighbours.

Furthermore, even the small corpus that has come down to us shows the pervasiveness of bilingualism in 1st-century AD Gaul, a bilingualism that was going to be resolved in favour of Latin monolingualism, although the language had previously co-existed quite happily in close proximity to Etruscan and Lepontic in Cisalpine Gaul, and to Greek in the Rhone estuary next to Massalia.

More generally, and from a more modern standpoint, the Gaulish case illustrates how, in the situation of a minority language in the ancient world, literacy's role was

quite different from our present understanding: the absence of mass media, starting with mass book production, put a completely different face on the value of reading and writing. This "non-cultural" bias in the use of literacy was compounded in the Gaulish case by a resolute refusal to allow their sacred texts to be written down. In this context, literacy served the purpose of record-keeping, and communication at a distance by letter, as well as the erection of permanent markers and monuments. It also had a religious role, both in dedications, and in direct communications with the spirits through written imprecations.

A Run through the Evidence

Gallo-Etruscan

There are only a half dozen of these inscriptions, which come from Northern Italy (known as Cisalpine Gaul). The tribe of Gauls living here were the Insubres. They used an alphabet derived from Etruscan, written from left to right. The three longest inscriptions run to 2-3 lines, recording who was responsible for the setting up of cairns, or stone tumuli for funerals.

Of these three, two are bilingual, recording the same information in Latin and Gaulish.

The inscriptions are all except one found within 50 km of the city of Novaria (modern Novara). The one exception turned up much further south, at Todi (ancient Tuder) in Umbria. All the inscriptions which are datable (essentially graffiti) appear to date from the 2nd century BC.

The alphabet used is a mirror-image of the "Lugano" alphabet, used to write (from right to left) a closely-related language, known as Lepontic, of which there are about 30



Figure 1: Ancient Sites and Tribes Mentioned

inscriptions within 50 km of Lake Maggiore (Lacus Verbanus) and Lake Como (Lacus Larius) (some 75 km north of Novaria). These inscriptions are mostly older, from the 6th to the 1st century BC.

As this short inscription shows, the alphabet is not strictly adequate to Gaulish, in that its letters do not distinguish voiced from voiceless stop consonants. And pre-consonantal nasals are also omitted.

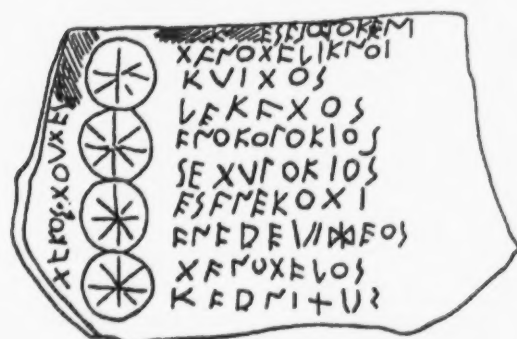


Figure 2: Insubrian Inscription at Briona

This typical inscription reads:

TANOTALIKNOI	Dannotalos-son
KUITOS	Quintos
LEKATOS	the legate
ANOKOPOKIOS	Andocombogios
SETUPOKIOS	Setubogios
ESANEKOTI	(sons) of Essandecotos
ANAREUIZEOS	Andareuiseos
TANOTALOS	Dannotalos
KARNITUS	built the tumulus

with a vertical note at the side:

TAKOS TOUTAS	decision of the tribe
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Gallo-Greek

These inscriptions are mostly found in the region of the Rhone estuary, east of the Greek colony of Massalia (modern Marseilles). These are from the period 3rd to 1st century BC. They would have been made by members of the Volcae tribe. However, there are a few more found along the Mediterranean coast, further north on the Rhone and on the upper Loire and upper Seine, more or less due north of the Rhone estuary. These tend to be a century later, some of them up to 50 AD.

Altogether, they include 70 inscriptions on stone, including funerary inscriptions on pillars over a meter high, and dedications (e.g. of sacred shrines); and more than 220 potsherds, showing ownership or authorship.

The Greek alphabet used includes a number of digraphs that had established themselves historically because of changes in Hellenistic Greek, without any reference to Gaulish: so ou represents [u], and ei long [i]. But there is no use of the ε:η or the ο:ω distinctions, available in Greek, to show distinctions of length. Nevertheless, ε, η, ο and ω were all used: e.g.
σεγομαρος ουιλλονεος τουτουιος ναμανσατις ει
ωρου βηλη σαμι σοσιν νεμητον
segomaros uilloneos tououtious namausatis foru belesami
sosin nemeton

"Segomaros son of Uillu, citizen of Nemausus, dedicated to Belesama this shrine"¹

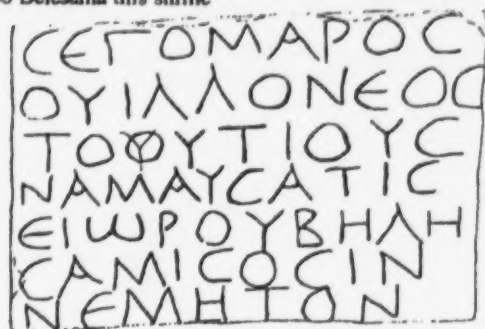


Figure 3: Gallo-Greek Inscription found at Vaison, near Arausio (Orange)

Gallo-Latin

Inscriptions in Gaulish written in Latin characters date from the one century following Caesar's conquest of Transalpine Gaul, i.e. from 50 BC to 50 AD. There are no inscriptions found north of the Seine, except for potter's stamps, which quite likely were moved from their place of origin.

The alphabet is supplemented by two letters borrowed from Gallo-Greek: Θ, used to represent /ts/ and the letter X, used only in the digraphs XT and XS, which represented a velar fricative. (See figure 4 below.) The Θ, known as T GALLICUM, was seen as exotic, even magical, by the Romans. (Lambert 1997:91).² It was often written with a barred D.

Gallo-Latin inscriptions on stone are in fact much rarer than Gallo-Greek, numbering only 16 discovered to date.

Substantial fragments of a Gaulish calendar on bronze have been discovered at Coligny, 80 km east of Lyon (Lugdunum).

There are also numerous inscriptions on "instrumentum", i.e. on movable objects. These include potter's stamps, spindle-whorls, rings, potter's kiln firing accounts, various pottery inscriptions (including slogans and advertisements), and a large number of magical invocations, mostly on lead.

A mixing-bowl found at Banassac (40 km north of

¹ Compare the one word of Galatian which is recorded in Strabo (12.5.1): Δρυνημετον *dru-nemeton* "oak-shrine" - where the same morph is spelt with two s.

² It is mentioned by Quintilian (2nd half of 1st century AD) as the kind of thing an affected writer might use, with poisonous effect. (Quintilian VIII. 3. 28, quoting Vergil Catalepton ii.)

Condatomagus) carries the legend:

lubi rutenica onobia | tiedi ulana celicnu

This is not fully intelligible, but the first word is clearly the imperative of the verb *lub-* "love", and the whole has been taken by Lambert (1997:140-1) as a commercial message: "Love Ruthenian heart's ease: you'll get your fill at the banquet."

Advertising could also use "eye candy" in a way decidedly reminiscent of the 20th century:



Figure 4: Potter's stamp, found at Caudebec-en-Caux, near Rotomagus (Rouen)

The inscription reads:

rextugenos sullias avvot

Rextugenos (son) of Sulla
made (this pot).

Eastern Gaulish and Galatian

Although we know there were substantial Gaulish-speaking populations in central and eastern Europe (often called the Scordisci), crossing into Galatia in central Anatolia, we have almost no inscriptions from this area, and none at all which display actual text beyond proper names.

Our evidence is, then, that all literacy in Gaulish was concentrated in Europe west and south of the Rhine.

Social background

From the inscriptions that we are aware of, there was a role for Gaulish writing in the ceramics business, both within the trade, and in relations with the purchasing public. Romantic inscriptions are found on gifts and keepsakes (those rings and spindle-whorls).

For inscriptions on stone, there is a vast preponderance of Latin over Gaulish: more than 10,000 against just 16. But this is not surprising: this is a medium which is only available to the rich, who could be expected to be more Romanized than most. Moreover, writing on stone is writing for the future, and the prospects of Gaulish must have looked precarious around the turn of the first millennium. (The last recorded revolt of Gauls against

Roman control is that of Florus and Sacrovir, in the region of the Treveri (Trier) in eastern Gaul, in 21 AD.)

We know from Caesar (6.14) that writing was deliberately banned from the education of Druids, the Gauls' sacred élite: this involved committing to memory a vast number of verses over up to 20 years. He speculates that they would have had two reasons for this: to prevent the knowledge from being divulged, and also to prevent Druids' powers of memory from being compromised. He adds that "in other matters, for both public and private accounts, they use Greek letters". This seems to square with the archaeological record, although after Caesar's conquests, Roman letters came to be used too, at least for the 100 years remaining to written Gaulish.

In fact, Gaulish literature was in the hands of two other classes of professionals besides the Druids. Strabo (4.1.4), writing in the first half of the first century AD: writes: "The Bards (Βαρδοί) are singers and poets, the Vates (Ουατεις) are diviners and natural philosophers; while the Druids (Δρυιδοι), in addition to natural philosophy, study also moral philosophy." Diodorus Siculus, some 50 years later, (V.31) concurs: "Among them are also to be found lyric poets (ποιητὰι μελῶν) they call Bards (Βαρδους). These men sing to the accompaniment of instruments which are like lyres, and of some they sing praises, and of others abuse. And there are some philosophers and theologians they especially honour, calling them Druids (Δρυιδας). And they also use seers (μάντιον), holding them in high esteem; they foretell the future through observing birds and sacrifices of sacred animals, and keep the whole mass subject to them." Neither Bards nor Vates are anywhere recorded as using writing.

Strabo also records (4.1.5) that Gaulish notables of the region would send their children to be educated in Greek in Massalia (Marseilles). He says that "sophists (professional educators) were employed, both privately and at the city's expense, just like medical doctors". There the children would acquire Greek, as well probably as Latin. All higher academic studies would be in these languages, so literacy in Gaulish could be no more than a convenience for daily life in Gaul.

Functions of literacy before printing

Personal communication

In the absence of a literary use for Gaulish literacy, its functions would have been for day-to-day practicality. In western European conditions, the ephemeral materials used for notes and correspondence (typically wooden and/or waxed tablets, and sheets of papyrus) have not survived.

But it is possible to generalize from other situations where the materials have — in Egypt, where papyrus survives in the dry, and also exceptionally in the north of Britain, where a cache of letters on wood from AD 90 to 120 has been discovered at Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall. These last include letters (including a birthday party invitation), military reports, applications for leave and accounts. Among papyri, besides this kind of material, one also finds legal contracts, lists and receipts.

Such items must be presumed to have existed in Gaulish too, although the fact that the literate sector of the population was also the most likely to be bilingual in Greek, or increasingly Latin, would have made official documents in Gaulish rare. Strabo (4.1.5) reports that they wrote their accounts (συμβόλαια) in Greek, but as we shall see some accounts have survived at least partly written in Gaulish.

Public inscriptions

The kind of inscription that survives, on deliberately permanent materials (stone or bronze tablets) are grave stones, dedication tablets (recording an offering to a god), and boundary stones (perhaps also marking out a precinct for sacred use).

The sole remnant on a bronze tablet is a calendar found at Coligny, which appears intended for day-to-day mnemonic use, since each date has a small hole opposite it which could be filled with a peg. If it is, as (Lambert 1997: 115) insists, a Druidical document, its existence also breaks the ban on written notes that Caesar says the Druids observed.

These are items of religious import, for private or liturgical use, but intended to be permanent. They are notably not part of public, secular culture.

Accounting

Different are the accounting documents that, essentially by the nature of the business they served, were turned into permanent materials. These are the accounts of the potters of ancient Condatomagus (modern La Graufesenque, near Millau, on the lower Rhône), circular plates on which are recorded the names of different potters against the wares that they put into a batch for joint firing in a kiln.

The texts are a list of Gaulish names against (Latin-denominated) pots and Roman numerals, and are in fact mostly in Latin: however, the ordinal numbers of the batches are given in Gaulish (*tuθos nametos* "batch the ninth"), as well as the odd comments (e.g. *pinas* "bought") on the outside of the plates.

These must be typical of a vast number of note- and account-keeping documents which facilitated working life and trade, and would have been in a mixture of the languages actually used in everyday life, Gaulish, Greek and Latin.

Personal inscriptions

Gaulish literacy was also used for fun. Spindle-whorls bear risqué inscriptions, (as often in Latin as in Gaulish, or a mix of the two languages):



Figure 5: Spindle-whorl from Sens - Agedincum

from Sens - Agedincum:

geneta imi daga uimpi (Gaulish)
"girl I-am good pretty"

from Autun - Augustodunum:

moni gnatha gabi (Gaulish)
buθθuton imon "my girl, take penis' mine"

nata uimpi curmi da (Latin / Gaulish)
"girl pretty, beer give"

marcosior maternia (Gaulish / Latin)
"I-want-to-ride motherly-bits, or with Maternia"

taurina uimpi (Latin? / Gaulish)
"heifer pretty"

geneta vis cara (as Latin)
"girl, you-want darling" or
"girl, the force is dear"; or
(as Gaulish)
"girl, get away, darling"

and there are also a few inscriptions on rings, although these have resisted any interpretation except as proper names.

³ Two instances of the magical TAV GALLICVM in this word! (But cf Irish *bod*, Greek *πόδιον* with the same meaning. /pothē/ < *p^hot^h-t^ha, by Grassmann's law and regular dissimilation of a dental before a dental to s: cf. peisthē < *p^het^h-t^he 'was persuaded'.)

Magic & curses

Finally, combining sacred use with the personal, a few magical imprecations have been found, inscribed on lead. They are intended to be permanent, but as direct communications with spirits, they do not need to be legible for outsiders. Hence, one can expect frequent use of the vernacular.

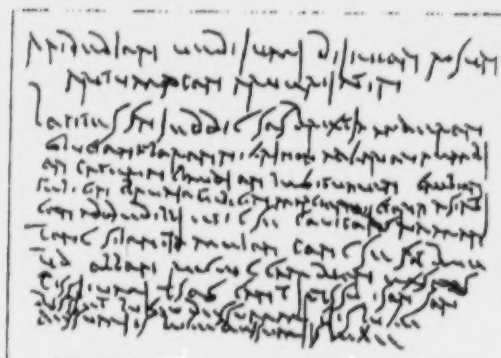


Figure 6: Inscription on lead from Chamalières

The most substantial (and the longest continuous inscriptions in Gaulish that have been found anywhere - made up of complete pages with a dozen lines of about 20 characters) are the lead tablets of Chamalières (1 page) and Larzac (4 pages).⁴ The former is an imprecation against a number of identified oath-breakers; and the latter a charm issued by a number of named female witches in order to resist any curses (*defixiones*) that certain other witches may have placed. This, or rather the common curse (*defixio*) inscribed on lead, is a common type of surviving personal inscription: 130 of them have been found thrown into the waters of Bath in England (Aquae Sulis): but all but two are in Latin, and those two exceptions are in a language still unreadable (Tomlin 1987).

Bilingual influences

Choice of alphabet

From the geographical locations, and the period in which they were executed, it is clear that the choice of alphabet used to write Gaulish was a local decision, conditioned by the neighbouring dominant language. Despite being written in parts of a large, more or less contiguous area (from Cisalpine Gaul to the valley of the Seine), for some 300 years, there was never an autonomous Gaulish

⁴ Chamalières is a thermal spring in Puy-de-Dôme, 120 km east of Lugdunum. Larzac is just south of Condatomagus.

tradition of literacy. Gauls simply used locally current alphabets to write their own language: the assumption must be that the majority of Gaulish writers were bilinguals who happened to be literate in the neighbouring language, whether Lepontic, Greek or Latin.

The first alphabet (Etruscan/Lepontic) used was systematically deficient for Gaulish (lacking a voice distinction for stop consonants, and the notation of pre-consonantal nasals). Nevertheless, the Gauls continued to use it (perhaps because of kinship with the Lepontic speakers from whom they had adopted it — certainly their language is closely related). Strangely, it was often accompanied by inscriptions in the Latin alphabet on the same stone, an alphabet which neatly represented the voicing distinctions absent from the Etruscan.

The second alphabet used (Greek) carried over baroque features of Greek vowel representation which were simply confusing in the writing of Gaulish.

Ironically, it was only with the adoption of the Roman alphabet (which, being caused by Caesar's conquest, was a prelude to the loss of the language altogether) that Gaulish introduced innovations to an alphabet specifically for its own convenience: the "T gallicum" (Θ) and the use of X to mark a velar fricative.

Choice of language

Those literate in Gaulish were evidently involved in a speech situation where code-switching between Gaulish and another language was possible, and probably (in the case of Latin at the turn of the millennium) quite pervasive.

The few Insubrian funerary inscriptions are mostly bilingual (with the Latin preceding the Gaulish version).

The Gallo-Greek inscriptions are monolingual in Gaulish. But for just this case we have documentary evidence (from Strabo) that well-to-do Gauls would go for education to the nearby Greek-speaking city of Massalia.

The Gallo-Latin inscriptions, although they are not bilingual in the sense of providing parallel versions of the same message, nevertheless show that Latin and Gaulish existed in close proximity. The funerary and dedication inscriptions are pure Gaulish (though much less numerous than their Latin equivalents of the same area and era). But the day-to-day inscriptions, whether commercial (as the Graufesenque kiln batch accounts) or personal (as the spindle-whorls), are often in a mixture of Gaulish and Latin. Furthermore, the spindle-whorls include brief bilingual puns (*geneta vis cara, taurina uimpi, marcosior*

maternia) which suggest that the giver and receiver were at home in both languages.

Role of literacy in loss of Gaulish

As ever, the death of a language takes place largely off stage. We have little evidence beyond what we have reviewed above for the final abandonment of the Gaulish language. But the vast predominance of inscriptions in Latin over those in Gaulish in the century following Caesar's conquest is eloquent.

The Gauls, according to Caesar, had taken a self-conscious stand that their culture would be transmitted through the oral medium or not at all; this did not survive the forcible suppression of its interpreters the Druids: their final stronghold, on the island of Mona (Anglesey), was reduced with much bloodshed by the Roman general Agricola in 78/9 AD.

It may, in fact, be an anticipation to suppose that Gaulish ceased to be spoken about the time when it ceased to be written. There are a number of references to outsiders' encounters with Gaulish after 50 AD. St Irenaeus of Lugdunum (Lyon) learnt "a barbarous tongue" in the 2nd century. In the first quarter of the 3rd century, the lawyer Ulpian declared that certain affidavits could be issued in Gaulish (Digest 31.1.11). Lampridius, writing at the end of the 3rd century, claims that a Druidess foretold in Gaulish the death of Alexander Severus (who reigned 222-235). In a dialogue of Sulpicius Severus (363-425), a Gaul who does not speak Latin well is told: "speak to us in Celtic, or if you prefer, in Gaulish".

At the end of the 4th century St Hieronymus (331-420) declares that he can communicate with the Galatians in Ancyra (in central Anatolia) in much the same language as spoken by the Treveri (near Trier) — but his authenticity is disputed, as it is suggested he may just have been following Varro (an author of the 1st century BC). And even in the 5th century, Sidonius Apollinaris declares that the nobility of the Arverni had just learnt Latin and put off the "scales of Gaulish speech (*sermonis Gallici squaman*)."

None of these late references imply any continuation of written Gaulish after the 1st century AD.

Classical culture evidently has nothing positive to say about the value of the Gaulish language tradition, or the content of all those verses which the Druids would commit to memory. Indeed the tradition of the *interpretatio Romana*, whereby Romans simply identified

foreign deities with gods in their own pantheon,⁵ meant that they could hardly recognize what was being lost.

It is evident that no stable *modus vivendi* was found between Gaulish and Latin: although Gaulish may have survived in inaccessible regions for some further centuries after it ceased to be the majority language in Gaul (in the first century AD), there was no accommodation ultimately found with Latin in the practical realm. People just dropped their Gaulish, and any culture that went with it.

In fact, the absence of a literary tradition as a vehicle for the culture may have meant that Gaulish was incapable of winning the degree of respect which might have saved it: contrast the fate of Greek, a language whose currency was never in the slightest threatened by the political subjection of Greek realms to Rome, and which indeed went on to supersede Latin as the official language of the Empire in the East.

Epilogue

Despite further encroachment of Roman power in the first century AD, related Celtic-language traditions were not extinguished on the island of Britain, still less in Ireland which was never invaded by the Romans at all. Literacy appears⁶ to have reached the British Celtic-speakers not at all, and the Irish only gradually, and then only on their own terms, through the indigenous development of the Ogham script in the 5th century AD (McManus 1997).

Subsequently, in the 5th-6th centuries, the Irish adopted Christianity, and with it the Roman alphabet, from British sources (McCone 1996:30). Literacy then became part of their culture, with their all branches of their literature also committed to writing. As a result, literacy was to play little role in the quite different crisis which threatened the insular Celtic languages 2000 years later.

⁵ This for example is what Caesar does in his description of Gaulish religion at *On the Gallic War* 6.17, saying that the Gauls have the same beliefs about these gods as everyone else, but that their chief god is Mercury (inventor of all arts, guide of roads and journeys, with particular power over money-making and business); Apollo (healer), Mars (war-maker), Jupiter (ruler of heavens) and Minerva (initiator of tasks and enterprises) are in the second rank. There is still dispute on which of the named Gaulish gods he meant. Cf Cunliffe 1997: 185.

⁶ at least until the inscriptions from Bath in Tomlin 1987 can be deciphered.

Acknowledgments

The details of Gaulish and other ancient epigraphy quoted here are much indebted to two sources: Lambert 1997 (cited below), and the notes from Jürgen Uhlich's lectures on Continental Celtic (delivered at St Patrick's College, Maynooth in 1998). All the illustrations (except for the map of Gaul) are derived from Lambert 1997. Errors of fact and interpretation remain my own.

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Orthography, Lexicography, and Language Change

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Abstract

The Coeur d'Alene language was first recorded on paper at the turn of the last century by an associate and a student of Franz Boas, both of whom used a fairly accurate phonetic transcription. This transcription was used as the orthography for Gladys Reichard's grammar of the Coeur d'Alene language and subsequent papers. In the 1970's, a new orthography was devised with the goal of employing the English alphabet, sans diacritics, to represent the sounds of the language. A rudimentary dictionary was produced, and the new orthography was officially adopted by the tribe; it is currently being used in the language preservation and revitalization programs undertaken by the tribe. The problem with the old orthography was that it was too narrow phonetically and visually cluttered with diacritics; the problem with the new orthography is that it is both familiar and inaccurate and is thus fostering changes in the pronunciation of the language.

A new and more complete set of dictionaries of Coeur d'Alene is being compiled, and one of the aims of the dictionaries project is to preserve traditional pronunciation while recognizing the tribe's official orthography. The solution chosen is to provide both a phonetically based transcription and a transcription in the tribe's orthography for every dictionary entry.

Introduction

Coeur d'Alene is an Interior Salishan language spoken only by a very few elders on or near the Coeur d'Alene Reservation in northern Idaho. The language is profoundly endangered. One speaker, whose idiolect includes many syntactic and lexical elements from the Spokane language, can relate stories fluently as topics arise in bilingual conversation. A second speaker can present short, practiced narratives and add modestly to bilingual conversation, and is knowledgeable in the structure of the language. A third speaker will initiate conversation in Coeur d'Alene but will revert quickly to English, perhaps due to a lack of proficient listeners. In efforts at elicitation, this third speaker's ability resembles that of other elders, who recall only limited vocabulary sets, often including numbers, words adopted from French, and terms remembered from childhood.

Efforts to revive the language have been strong, including high school and college level courses taught on the reservation. The tribe's own language program, which has its office located at the tribal headquarters

and is open to all comers, conducts social events where learners are encouraged to speak the language.

Due to the dearth of active fluent speakers, the success of all these programs is dependent upon the teachers' and students' abilities to read the language. The Coeur d'Alene language is exceedingly difficult phonetically from the perspective of European language speakers. Coeur d'Alene also has especially interesting phonological features including post-tonic truncation and several types of distant progressive and regressive assimilation. In fact, every researcher since Reichard (1938) who has studied the language has spent much or all of their energies in figuring out the sound system (Sloat, 1966; Johnson, 1975; Doak, 1992). These complications make the development of a useable orthography especially difficult.

The Orthographies

Over the last century, the Coeur d'Alene language has been transcribed using three distinct systems. Each is described here, and their differences are discussed.

Reichard

The first, and oldest, is the system used by James Teit and Gladys Reichard, both of whom were under the guidance of Franz Boas. Their system of fairly close phonetic transcription was used in the original linguistic studies of the language, from 1904 through the late 1920's. While Teit's and Reichard's use of the Boasian system varied slightly from one another's, their understanding of the system was consistent; Reichard was, in Boas' estimate, "able to identify most of the terms" transcribed by Teit and check them with native speakers (Boas and Teit 1930:preface).

Bitar

One of Reichard's native language consultants, Lawrence Nicodemus, learned this system of transcription and used it until the early 1970's. Then, in collaboration with Joseph Bitar of the Southwest Research Associates of Albuquerque, Nicodemus devised the second orthography. The copyright page of Nicodemus 1975a states, "Orthography and Transcription by Joseph Bitar", so we will refer to this as the Bitar system. In the introduction to his two-

volume dictionary, Nicodemus¹ states that he "shall attempt to present [the language] in a more popular, less scientific form for the benefit of the layman who wishes to master the language" (1975b, vol. I: iv). This 'less scientific' form is less accurate phonetically, but has at least two advantages in that it reflects a native speaker's own evaluation of the sounds, symbols and words of the language, and it can be typed. This system has been used by recent researchers (cf. Palmer, Nicodemus and Felsman, 1987; and Brinkman, mss.), and it has been adopted by the tribe as the official orthography of the language (cf. Matheson, mss.).

Linguistic phonetic orthography

The third system of transcription used in recording the Coeur d'Alene language is a variant of the International Phonetic Alphabet. We refer to it here as the linguistic phonetic orthography (LPO). It is the same system of transcription that has been used by most linguists studying Salishan language and which has been adopted by other Salishan tribes in the northwest Interior and on the Coast, including the Colville-Okanagan (Mattina, 1987), Spokane (Carlson and Flett, 1989), Klallam (Montler, ms.), and Lushootseed (Bates, Hess and Hilbert, 1994). It has also been used by Johnson (1975) and Sloat (1966) in their dissertations addressing the phonology of the language. The system is akin to the phonetic system used by Reichard, using a single symbol for each unique sound in the language. Advances in knowledge about the Salishan languages and in Coeur d'Alene phonology in particular allow a simplified transcription augmented by a small set of rules of pronunciation. This is the system that will be used by the Coeur d'Alene Dictionaries Project in conjunction with Bitar's system.

Comparison

The three systems used to transcribe the Coeur d'Alene language are shown in Table 1.² Stress is marked on the vowel in LPO and Reichard; Bitar may mark stress with underlining, but the marking is inconsistent. Reichard recognizes and records the release of a glottal stop by transcribing a raised vowel which is homorganic with the vowel that precedes the glottal stop: a^h. Bitar and the LPO do not transcribe glottal release. Where the glottal stop is inserted by rule (such as with an inchoative infix -ʔ-), Reichard writes the homorganic vowel on the line rather than raised: aʔa. Predictable long vowels are marked with a

¹ Perhaps with Bitar; the authorship of the introduction is not clear.

² The Jesuit priests, who began their missionization of the Coeur d'Alene in the mid 1800s, have devised their own transcription system(s) for recording hymn and scripture translations. These have been of little consequence outside the church, and will be discussed minimally in this paper.

raised dot in LPO (a^h), by doubling in Bitar (aa), and by a raised vowel following the lengthened vowel in Reichard (a^h).

LPO	Bitar	Reichard
a	a	a
e	e	ä, ê
i	i	i
o	o	o
u	u	u
ə	[see text]	E, t, u
p	p	p
pʰ	pʰ	pʰ
b	b	b
m	m	m
mʰ	mʰ	mʰ
w	w	w
wʰ	wʰ	wʰ
t	t	t
tʰ	tʰ	tʰ
d	d	d
n	n	n
nʰ	nʰ	nʰ
s	s	s
c	ts	ts
cʰ	tsʰ	tsʰ
ʃ	sh	c
ɟ	j	dj
ç	ch	tc
çʰ	chʰ	tcʰ
y	y	y
yʰ	yʰ	yʰ
gʷ	gw, gu	gw, gu
kʷ	kw, k, ku, ko	kʷ, ku
kʰʷ	kʰw, kʰu, kʰo	kʰʷ, kʰu, kʰu
xʷ	khw, khu, kho	xʷ, xu
q	q	q
qʰ	qʰ	qʰ
qʷ	qw, qu, qo	qʷ, (q),
qʰʷ	qʰw, qʰu, qʰo	qʰʷ, qʰu
x	qh	x
xʷ	qhw, qhu, qho	xʷ
l	l	l
lʰ	lʰ	lʰ
ɬ	ɬ	ɬ
r	r	r
rʰ	rʰ	rʰ
ɕ	(,)	R
ɕʰ	(,)ʰ	Rʰ
ɕʷ	(w, u)	rʷ
ɕʰʷ	(w, u)ʰ	rʰʷ
ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
h	h	h

Table 1: Coeur d'Alene Orthographies

Bitar does not indicate reduced vowels or excrescent schwa; a full vowel symbol is used for each vowel sound, or the sound is not transcribed. Nicodemus (1975b, vol. I:iv) states that the right parenthesis represents a "voiceless" pharyngeal, but uses the symbol rarely, and only for a few pharyngeals that occur in syllable codas. (The right parenthesis does not occur marked as labialized in his dictionary.) Labialization on any segment may be indicated by a round vowel preceding the segment only when the segment occurs word-finally (this is shown in the table only for the glottalized labialized pharyngeal).

The Reichard orthography was in use when there were still numerous speakers of the language and, as far as is known, very little native interest in transcribing the language.³ The Bitar orthography has been used by the tribe's language program, the Lakeside High School language class (including a textbook in progress), the North Idaho College courses, and is used sporadically and irregularly by the tribe on street signs and in the tribal newspaper.

Lexicography and Language Change

The old orthographies are contributing to errors in pronunciation by new language learners, and possibly to language change. Language change is not in itself objectionable, and is in fact inevitable; however, it is distressing to find the source of the change to be partially the result of poorly understood and inaccurate orthographies offered as the only tools available for beginning students of the language. While spelling systems like that of English have historical and traditional excuses for their modern inaccuracy, they also have a history of use. In devising an orthography for use in the reclamation of a previously unwritten language, it seems advisable to use a system that accurately reflects the pronunciation of the remaining or recorded fluent speakers. Once the learners themselves are familiar with traditional pronunciation, the language will no doubt change in accordance with expected influences on living languages.

Most of the current students and teachers of the language have heard the language spoken by only one living native speaker. Some may have also had the pleasure of hearing a second; both speakers participate to varying degrees in the language classes, and are essentially the only living sources available to the students. Of necessity, all students rely on the transcription of the language as it appears in the Nicodemus dictionary.

At least one student, maybe more, has looked for sources beyond the Nicodemus dictionary, and has

found and used Reichard's grammar (1938); and at least one teacher has made use of Doak's dissertation (1997); thus there is current use of all three orthographies.

There are four specific areas where the current orthographies differ: transcribing stops vs. fricatives; indicating vowel variety; marking stress; and marking glottalization. The pronunciation errors engendered by the older orthographies (Reichard and Bitar) are presented in the following sections.⁴ In some cases, these pronunciations occur only when a person is reading, and thus indicate simple errors. In other cases, the pronunciations occur with every use, indicating an essential change in the language.

Stops and Fricatives

Individual velar and uvular fricatives are written with multiple symbols in the Bitar orthography. As Table 1 shows, the labialized velar fricative [xʷ] is transcribed as *khw*, and the uvular fricatives [x] and [xʷ] are transcribed as *qh* and *qhw*.

An example that pervades is the pronunciation of the determiner *xʷ*. Some learners pronounce this word [kwe], based on the Bitar spelling *khwe*. At least one person uses this pronunciation consistently. The related deictic *xʷ?* and its variants also begin with [xʷ] and are also pronounced with initial [k].

Vowel Variety

Reichard's system of vowel transcription is at first overwhelming. By marking releases of glottal stops with full or raised vowels and employing three separate graphemes to represent excrescent schwa, her system includes a full 23 unique vowels. Glottal stop releases and schwa variants (discussed in following sections) are all generally predictable, and are included in the LPO system as rules rather than symbols. The same is true for the long vowels, or what Reichard describes as "doubled" vowels (1938:529).

Reichard's three distinct symbols used to represent predictable variants of excrescent schwa are *E*, *ɪ*, and *ʊ*. Generally, Reichard uses *E* before nasals, where it indicates a syllabic nasal; *ɪ* represents a very short sound, approaching the articulatory position of [i], which occurs before laterals or between alveolars or alveopalatals; *ʊ* represents another very short sound, this one approaching the articulatory position of [u], which occurs adjacent to labialized segments. These

³ Doak has found no records by any others who have used this system, though her search has been casual. The tribal archives may show some evidence of its use.

⁴ Doak has made observations on pronunciation during 15 years of field research. Out of our utmost respect for all teachers and learners of the language, no names or affiliations will be associated with the pronunciations remarked upon here; many are the same pronunciations Doak has produced at one time or another.

symbols are mistakenly interpreted as full vowels by those unfamiliar with Reichard's system.

For example, the dot under the *u* is unfamiliar, and it goes unseen, or perhaps is ignored; the result is that the learner pronounces *u* as [u].

Though simpler in appearance, the Bitar vowel system can also be misleading. Bitar uses only five vowel symbols, and for the most part does not indicate excrement vowels. But he does use full vowel symbols to indicate reduced vowels, and this can cause problems in pronunciation and interpretation.

In the following example, the two *u*'s both represent underlying /e/, from the root *√ceg* 'nature, character', which reduce to schwa when unstressed (the Bitar transcription precedes the phonetic transcription):

syentsugwtsugwicht (Nicodemus 1975b 1:250)
[syencəg^wcəg^wtʃt] 'copycat'

In cases where stress is not marked, reduced vowels represented by full vowel symbols is an especially difficult problem, and will be discussed in the following section.

Marking Stress

One of the significant omissions of the Nicodemus dictionary and its accompanying course book (Nicodemus 1975a) is the regular marking of stress. In the course book, stress is not marked at all; in the dictionary, stress is marked by underlining on about a quarter of the entries. A "Note on Accent" that appears in volume one of the dictionary states that accent, or stress, is "so important in fact that it can sometimes change the meaning of a word" and that "it must be learned from a native speaker."⁵ This is nearly impossible with the paucity of speakers available to learn from, and the problem is exacerbated when an available speaker relies on the written materials.

One example of frequent mispronunciation due to lack of stress marking is shown in the phrase meaning 'nine hundred'. The form given in the course book (Nicodemus, 1975a:53) is unstressed and capitalized:

QHAQH'NUT HA SNOK'O'QIN

Due to the lack of stress marking, a person reading from the book pronounced the phrase with primary stress incorrectly placed on the penultimate syllable:

*[x̣x̣ṛɪ̣ḍɪ̣ṭ ha snək^wʔqən] 'nine hundred'

⁵ Nicodemus 1975a:4. The course book is accompanied by a set of six cassette tapes.

In the audio tapes that accompany the book, the phrase is correctly pronounced with stress on the /i/ of the final syllable.

An example of the problems associated with an inconsistent vowel system combined with lack of stress marking is in the pronunciation of the word for *bluebird*, which appears in the course book:

chatteqegwel (Nicodemus, 1975a:71)

The person reading this chose to pronounce it with stress on the second *e*, which by its appearance as a full vowel is apparently stressable. However, the correct pronunciation has stress on the first *e*:

[čattéqəg^wət] 'bluebird'

The remaining vowels, being unstressed, are reduced to schwa.

Marking Glottalization

A particularly confusing feature of the Bitar orthography is the inconsistent positioning of the glottalization mark. As shown in Table 1, glottalized stops and affricates are indicated with an apostrophe following the segment, while glottalized sonorant consonants are marked with an apostrophe preceding the segment. When this system is followed consistently, confusion necessarily occurs where an apostrophe, or glottalization mark, occurs between a stop or affricate and a sonorant consonant.

An example exists in the word for *children* (Nicodemus 1975b 1:240), where the apostrophe occurs between *ts* and *m*, both of which are segments that may be glottalized:

ststs'mj'lt 'children'

The correct interpretation in this case is *scem'ilt* rather than *scc'milt*. The same apostrophe also indicates an independent glottal stop word internally, causing similar confusion.

Language Death and Language Change

Some of the deviations from native pronunciation are the result of language death. A very few of the native learners have heard their elders, either parents and grandparents or great grandparents, speak the language and so know how the language sounds. Most learners are not so privileged. Now, the teaching of the language is dependent on written records and the availability of the two speakers who attend the classes. With language death come further restrictions in the learner's opportunities to hear the language in natural use. The result is that learners mispronounce, based on their inexperience, unfamiliarity with the sounds, and perhaps also "performance anxiety."

All of the problems discussed as resulting from poor orthographic representation are also problems of language death. Since the learners can't distinguish the sounds, they can't help but confuse the symbols.

Recognition and Production

Examples of change in the language resulting from the inexperienced ears and tongues of those who are attempting to speak the language include the velar for uvular pronunciations (e.g. [k] for [q]); stop for fricative pronunciations (e.g. [kw] for [x]); and the general lack of pharyngeal and glottalized segments where they are expected.

Representation

Efforts by tribal members to write the words they know often show a lack of detail similar to that observed in the speech of the language students. Several forms appeared in letters, captions, and in the subtitle of the June 2000 issue of the *Coeur d'Alene Council Fires*. Compare the word for *gathering* as it was typeset with the phonetic transcription of the form:

yap-keehn-um [y'a^opqín'm] 'gathering'

and as it appears in the Nicodemus dictionary:

'ya'(pqí'n'm (Nicodemus 1975b:1.315)

Note that the newspaper form includes no marking of glottalization and no pharyngeal resonant.

The letter *k* is used to represent the uvular stop [q] in the word for *gathering* just as it is in the written form for *grandmother*:

kana [qíne?] 'maternal grandmother'

The words for *grandmother* and *gathering* have the same stressed vowel, [í], which is written in one form as *ee* and in the other as *a*.⁶ The form for *grandmother* also lacks a symbol for the final glottal stop, as do the two forms for relatives three generations apart:

topiea [fúpye?]
toopeya [fúpye?]
'great grandparen/child'

Problems of this type are not due to lack of knowledge of the language, but a lack of tools: How does one write these sounds? Even the Bitar writing system, devised for ease of use and familiarity, is daunting. Native speakers recognize the unique sounds of the

language but are reluctant to use unique symbols to record it. Non-native users of the language are similarly reluctant; for example, the following spellings appear in a child's biography (Connolly 1990) which employs its own system of spelling. Each word is given with the Bitar spelling followed by the phonetic transcription and definition:

keéna qíne'
[qíne?] 'maternal grandmother'

scheé-chu-umsh schítsu'umsh
[sčícu?əmš] 'Coeur d'Alene people'

Chérumsh ch'e(wmsh
[čéč^owmš] 'pray!'

These examples again illustrate the *k* for [q] spelling, the lack of glottals and glottalization, and the lack of pharyngeal representation.

Innovation and Change

Efforts to revive the Coeur d'Alene language necessarily introduce new speakers and new terminology to the language environment. Until recently, one speaker has served as consultant to three generations of linguists, and has contributed to the development of the tribe's orthography and to the expansion of the lexical data set. Other speakers have only begun to be consulted in the coining of new words to accommodate new jobs and new technology, but were not involved with the development of the orthography. Each of the few surviving speakers has his or her own history and, in effect, his or her own dialect. The words recorded in the Nicodemus dictionary do not always reflect other native speakers' pronunciations. The inaccuracy of the Bitar system also fosters pronunciation errors, by native and non-native speakers alike. These factors contribute to language change based on diversity and error.

Fresh interest in the revival of the language has brought more of the young learners together with native speakers to cooperate in the development of a new Coeur d'Alene (cf. Montler 1999:488). Those who are just learning the language are aware of the difficulties they face when pronouncing the language, but are undaunted by the task. When they see a *q* on the printed page, and find they can produce only [k], they are aware of the discrepancy and are nevertheless determined to pursue fluency.⁷

In discussing the revitalization of Straits Salishan languages, Montler (1999) states:

Among a language's many functions, it is the emblematic function that is most needed--and the most viable--in the Native American communities

⁶ A probable reason for the use of *ee* and *a* is that stressed /i/ is sometimes diphthongized following /q/, sounding somewhat like English *a* in 'cane'.

⁷ R. Brinkman, personal communication, July 2000.

of the Northwest. Knowing one's ancestral language functions as the singular emblem of pride in one's identity. . . . Although the overriding goal for second language learners is to speak a form of the language as close to that of the ancestors as possible, the focus on the emblematic function puts perfection in matching the ancestors' pronunciation and grammatical construction into the background.

The Coeur d'Alene language is changing, as it must in order to survive. While the learners of the language attempt to reproduce its sounds accurately, factors including inconsistent and inaccurate recording of the language hamper their efforts.

The Coeur d'Alene Dictionaries Approach

The Reichard orthography is out of use because it is distractingly detailed and difficult to type. The Bitar orthography overcomes these obstacles, but creates problems of its own. Both orthographies have contributed to pronunciations inconsistent with the traditional sounds they attempt to record.

The Nicodemus dictionary and course book were clearly intended for community use, and the tribe has officially adopted the "linguistic style of Lawrence Nicodemus".⁸ However, the community itself has not embraced the system. When Coeur d'Alene words appear, for example, in the tribal newspaper, ad hoc English-based spellings are used.

One reason for its disuse may be that the Bitar system makes this phonologically complex language look confusingly like the more familiar English, which seems to give license to any English-like spelling. Another possible cause of the difficulties encountered in using this system is that explanation and detailed description of the values of the symbols are lacking. Resources for learning pronunciation by imitation are extremely limited.

The goals of the Coeur d'Alene Dictionaries Project include the notion of language preservation as well as revitalization. Our goal is to produce two dictionaries of the language. One dictionary will be an analytical dictionary using standard phonetic transcriptions of the sounds and detailed technical descriptions of pronunciation and usage. The other will be a learners' dictionary organized on the Bitar orthography supplemented with phonetic guides to the analytical dictionary. Both dictionaries will be produced from the same electronic database.

The analytic dictionary, being based on an orthography used by all of the neighboring Salishan languages, is

designed for use by comparative linguists and advanced students of the language. The instructional dictionary will be designed for ease of use and to foster students' interest in the language. It will, thus, forgo technical detail and serve as an introduction to the more detailed information contained in the analytical dictionary. Minor adjustments will be made to ease learning: for example, the fonts used to construct the learners' dictionary will be designed to reduce ambiguity found in the Nicodemus dictionary between glottalization of consonants and independent glottal stops. For example, glottalized *p* be will be printed *p'*, while the sequence of *p* plus a glottal stop will be printed *p'*.

As a convenient source of example pronunciations for students to imitate, the learners' dictionary will be accompanied by a CD containing sample words, phrases, and connected text keyed to dictionary entries. Importantly, the CD will contain samples from more than one speaker. Until now students have had access to lesson material spoken only by one person. We have tape recordings of six native-speakers, both men and women, that we will include on the CD. The CD will also contain a computer game that will give students practice in associating sounds with symbols of both orthographies and in recognizing the spelling of Coeur d'Alene words. The game will incorporate a sound database that can be expanded and changed to meet classroom needs. A version of this game is being used with success in teaching the distantly related Klallam language in the Port Angeles, Washington, public schools (Montler, 2000).

We believe that this dual orthography approach will help alleviate the problems presented by either system as the sole orthography. We hope to preserve as accurately as possible the sounds of the Coeur d'Alene language and at the same time make a dictionary that is maximally accessible to learners of the language.

Acknowledgements

The Coeur d'Alene Dictionaries Project is supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, SBR 9817629.

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Limitations of Literacy in Bagri

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Abstract

Bagri, a dialect of Rajasthani group of Indo-Aryan language family, is spoken by about five million speakers in northern Rajasthan and its adjacent areas of Haryana and Punjab states of India. During the last fifty years several literacy programmes have been launched in the Bagri speaking area by the state and central governments but due to some basic problems these programmes have not been so successful as they were expected to be. The literacy rate among the persons of age seven or more years is about fifty four percent according to National Sample Survey of the Bagri speaking area.

Obviously, there are some limitations of literacy in Bagri. Some of them are: dominance of Hindi, multilingualism, problem of a language and script choice, lack of literacy material in Bagri, absence of a standardised language, absence of grammar and dictionary, compromise with the script, social gap between literates and illiterates, low prestige of mother tongue education, incompatibility with the technological advancements, lack of political will both at various levels of policy making and their implementation, and lack of coordination among several decision making bodies.

The factors responsible for the limitations of literacy are more prominent in Bagri and if these are overcome, the literacy rate will be increased and will make the speakers aware of their right to information.

Literacy

'Literacy opens up avenues for communication that otherwise remain closed. It is a prerequisite for the acquisition of other skills and the development of more,' writes Gunnar Myrdal in *Asian Drama*. This is more relevant in this present context when the world is going through a process of change, which is unprecedented in its magnitude and implication.

India is one of those countries in Asia where there is a dire need of literacy. Promotion of literacy in India has been identified as one of the national missions because, according to Government of India (1988:5), literacy is 'an essential tool for communication and learning, for acquiring and sharing of knowledge and information, a precondition for an individual's evaluation and growth and for national development'.

Literacy is concerned with the acquisition of mere linguistic skills. Its domain is confined to the individual

ability to read and write. Its semantics, however, can be extended to the functional potentials of a language with regard to the graphic channel of communication. In its narrow sense, the ability to control the oral/aural medium of linguistic transmission in the form of speaking and listening skills is called articulatory while the ability to transmit the message through the visual/graphic substance involving the skills of reading and writing is designated as literacy (Srivastava, 1988).

Several literacy programmes have been in progress in India since its independence in 1947 which have been successful to some extent but there exist some limitations associated with literacy campaigns. These limitations differ from area to area. The major limitation is that of choice of the language and its script. One of such cases is in the Bagri speaking area in north-western India.

Literacy in Bagri

According to the Census of India (1991), Bagri is one of the 48 dialects of Hindi spoken mainly in Hanumangarh and Sirganganagar districts of Rajasthan, Hissar and Sirsa districts of Haryana, and Ferozepur and Muktsar districts of Punjab in India¹. Though spoken by about five million speakers, Bagri is an 'endangered' language according to established linguistic parameters.

Bagri speech community has been receptive to the literacy campaigns like Non-Formal Education (1974), National Adult Education Programme (1978), Post-Literacy Campaign (1979), National Literacy Mission (1988), and Adult and Continuing Education (1996), and Total Literacy Campaign. People started involving themselves in these popular programmes. These programmes have been successful to some extent and the literacy rate was 54 % of total persons, out of which 73% were males and 35% were females, according to National Sample Survey of 53rd round and Census of India (1991). Despite all these programmes, there has been some limitations to the enhancement of literacy in Bagri speaking area. Now there is an urgent need to remove these barriers and clear the path for the propagation of literacy in this linguistically, socially, and politically backward area.

¹ Also spoken in Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar area of Pakistan.

Limitations of Literacy

Lack of universal literacy has been a major factor in restricting total development in Bagri speaking area since independence. But in recent years there has been a spurt in literacy efforts. Allocation of public funds for literacy and work done by government as well as voluntary agencies has registered a remarkable jump. Limitations of literacy in Bagri are more prominent in linguistic, technological, and social issues. These issues are so interlinked that they can not be studied in isolation.

Linguistic Limitations

Hindi, the National Official Language of India, is spoken by about 500 million² speakers in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh states, and two Union Territories (UTs) of Chandigarh and Delhi. The 48 speech varieties spoken in these states and UTs are considered to be the dialects of Hindi. Thus Hindi, being the Official language, is the medium of education in these above mentioned states and UTs. The speech varieties spoken in Rajasthan, Bagri is one of them, are different from Hindi in phonological, morphological, and syntactical points of view. The literacy material supplied by the state and central government is in Hindi and this is the main limitation of literacy in Bagri speech community.

As it is well known that language represents culture, or vice versa. The culture represented by the literacy material written in Hindi is urban culture which is different from that of Bagri community which is dominated by peasants. Learners feel uncomfortable with the language which is different from their mother tongue in phonology, morphology, and syntax. Phonologically, the suprasegmentals of Bagri like tone, murmur vowels, and retroflex laterals, which create change in meaning, are altogether absent in Hindi. Morphologically, the plural number formation and nominative agentive case differ from that of Hindi. Syntactically, the compound and complex sentences are quite different from those of Hindi.

The script of Hindi, which is called Devanagari, is not able to represent all the sounds produced by the Bagri speakers. Due to this reason there seems to be a compromise with the script, as Bagri does not have a proper script and, for this purpose, employs Devanagari script of Hindi.

There are three varieties of Bagri³ slightly different from one another, and did not have a standard grammar and dictionary till the same was prepared in 1999. Due to all

these reasons, there has been a shifting of Bagri speakers to Hindi. Though they can speak Bagri and can write in Hindi but, as explained earlier, the script of Hindi is incapable of representing all the sounds of Bagri.

On the question of which language should be opted for literacy, there arise two conflicting claims: (a) literacy as a skill is most effectively achieved in the mother tongue as literacy presupposes articulation, (b) literacy as a function is most effectively achieved in the language of wider communication, which has literary tradition. These claims make two conflicting demands on language use in a literacy programme -that is, use of mother tongue or of a language of wider communication. The primary advantage in initiating literacy through the use of mother tongue is that it does not generate pressure on adult educands for learning two skills at the same time -both literacy and speaking.

There are many other positive gains (Srivastava, 1988) in promoting mother tongue education, such as providing equal access to educational opportunities for different sections of society, meeting the psychological needs of the people, identifying the learner's self with the local culture, bridging the gap between the language of the home and that of the school, etc. There are, however, several doubts expressed by the policy framers of literacy education about the promotion and implementation of mother tongue in education.

Technological Limitations

As modern life and modern societies have become more complex, demands on literacy have become more complicated. In the modern information age, not only has information and knowledge expanded phenomenally, techniques and devices for recording and storing information have also multiplied.

Newer methodologies of handling literacy often outstrip the capacity of formal learning system to teach new techniques fast enough to those who need to use them in their economic pursuits. This often means that formally literate person can suddenly become illiterate if he/she cannot keep abreast of changing demands of and on literacy.

Though newer technological experiments⁴ have been carried out in the field of literacy in Bagri speaking community, but due to lack of coordination between several governmental agencies and the literacy campaigns these have been turned a failure.

Being 'currently' literate is, therefore a changing and ever-moving goal line. Not only are the unlettered

² Including the number of speakers whose second language is Hindi.

³ These are aguni (eastern), alhuni (western), and mukhya (main)

⁴ Mainly audio-visual aids.

persons illiterate, but the formally literate persons are continuously in the danger of branded illiterate in the fast changing technological world.

Literacy and illiteracy, then can be seen as polar opposites on a continuum. At one end are the totally illiterate persons who are not able to read or write. At the other end are the theoretically fully literate persons who don't really exist. The 'so-called' literate person, then, can be put at various intermediate points on the continuum according to whether they are more or less literate in accordance to the ability to meet the functional demands of their professions. Within this framework an individual can become more or less literate according to these changing demands on literacy and newer opportunities for acquiring new literacy skills.

Within the same framework, it should be possible to make available literacy programmes that enable the totally illiterate individuals to slide up on the continuum in the search of adequate literacy skills for optimal functionality in their chosen occupations.

Just as the formally literate persons can go up and down on the literacy scale, an illiterate person can be helped to get onto the literacy continuum and gradually climb up the scale by acquiring functional literacy skills.

Given the fact that acquisition of the skills is a slow process, an illiterate person has to first realise the skills that he/she has already acquired through the process of learning by doing. Those skills have to be enriched with addition of basic literacy skills (Daswani, 1999) which would enable the learner to not only recognise his/her skills, but to apprehend the advantages that basic literacy can bring in the processes of learning through experience, in society, and by doing

Social Limitations

Bagri speaking area is rural and dominated by peasants. Being a socially conservative area, the literacy rate is not satisfactory. It is an educationally and politically backward area and very few persons are educated. Political will for the social and educational development is lacking. The higher education among women is negligible

The social gap has been widened among the literates and illiterates. As the literates prefer to associate themselves with the educated and more progressive one, whereas the illiterates still find themselves identified with the rural masses. Though both the sections are rural but the literates align themselves with the urban culture and thinking. They do not want to mingle with the rural and illiterate persons. This social gap is widening more and more with the introduction of the more sophisticated

programmes of literacy launched by state government in 1995 known as Total Literacy Campaigns, which have been a great success.

Bagri community is resistant to female education from the fear that it might alienate girls from traditional and social values and lead to maladjustment and domestic conflict. The prevalence of girl child labour is a serious disincentive to female education. Women living in rural areas and those belonging to the weaker sections of the society constitute an overwhelming percentage of the total number of illiterate persons in the Bagri area. Though intelligent and resourceful, they have remained passive spectators in the process of social development.

The education in Bagri is not encouraged by the parents because it is not associated with the 'main stream' culture that is represented by upper class elite; and also from the fear that the mother tongue education will make the student jobless. There is low prestige of mother tongue education. As the job market is dominated by Hindi or English speakers, those who are illiterates in these languages will be useless.

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Semantic Barriers to Literacy in the Sierra Tarahumara

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Abstract

This paper is about the Tarahumara people of north Mexico and a literacy education program being conducted by an evangelical Christian organization called the New Tribes Mission. Developing words following social notions (semantics) of Christian religion in order to teach units of literacy (reading and writing of Bible materials) is in conflict with the Tarahumara's linguistic rights. Tarahumara language and expression is descriptive of an historical social reality of struggle and it contains widespread cultural referents to indigenous religion, folklore, and myth. Their semantic knowledge includes seeing themselves as the "Pillars of the sky" (those of the salvation), and the missionaries goal to teach them that they are "sinners and in darkness," represents a contradiction and an unjust continuation of language discrimination.

*"One of their beliefs is that they alone are the people of God. All others are the sons of Satan. That false belief has to be challenged by biblical truth for them to realize they are sinners in need of a savior."*¹

The Tarahumara-Rarajipame

The Tarahumara are an indigenous people of northern Mexico occupying the northwestern corner of the State of Chihuahua. The Tarahumara-Rarámuri have a strong tradition of running. *Rarámuri* means "those who run well." They are famous for their foot racing abilities in which they kick a small wooden ball and race. *Rarajipame* means "runners with the ball." The most gifted runners can run for 6-8 hours non-stop, sometimes covering over 40 miles in a single race.² The Tarahumara-Rarámuri are the remaining descendents of a North Mexican Indian tribe that managed to resist mission integration and Catholic tradition. Because of their refusal to accept Catholicism, the Rarámuri are considered to be pagans. They communicate an oral tradition identifying

¹The quoted articles referenced throughout this paper were written by the missionaries themselves in the two locations where they work with the Tarahumara in Mexico: Guachochi, Chihuahua and El Manzano, Chihuahua. The articles are published by the National Arm of the New Tribes Mission in Mexico, the quarterly newsletter is called *Unknown Mexico*. (Pat Bennett, p.c., Feb. 24, 2000).

²The Tarahumara participated in the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. When the Tarahumara governor learned that the race was to be a mere 26 miles, he sent three girls to run it (Fontana, 1979).

themselves as "Pillars of the Sky" (Levi-Meyer, 1993). The Tarahumara translate that they originated from the location on the earth where the pillars existed that touched the sky, where the columns reached the heavens (González & Palma, 1985). The Rarámuri believe that they are a chosen people because they came from the great city where the pillars reached the sky, where columns touched the heavens.³ *Onorúame* (God the Father) was at the pillars of upright columns. Also, as the survivors of a great flood, they must continue to act as "pillars" believing that they are the agents that keep the sky from falling in again (González & Palma, 1985). They protect mankind through religious-wakes called *tesguinadas*. *Tesguino* is a corn-derived (fermented) beer. Beer is the national drink and medium of interchange for the Tarahumara.



Figure 1: A foot runner in Norogachi.
(Photo by J.E. Lonergan)

And they attach no disgrace or shame to drunkenness. Because of conflicting societal notions related to their identity, there was a strong resistance to Catholic integration and they refused to bow before the Catholic imagery. Their belief system and their unusual running abilities allowed them to escape into the deep gorges of

³ This is possibly a reference to the ancient cities of Gold. About 140 km north of the ruins of the *Pacimé* at *Nvo. CasasGrandes*, near Silver City, New Mexico is the site of one of the largest open-pit mines in the world, the Kennecott mine. The seven lost cities of gold are rumored to have existed in north Mexico.

the canyons of the Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains. The river systems⁴ flowing out from the Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains carve deep gorges; the most famous is the *Barranca de Cobre* (Copper Canyon). It is four times the size of the Grand Canyon in total acreage (Levi-Meyer, 1993). There are an estimated 50-65,000 Rarámuri-Tarahumara currently scattered in the canyons of the Sierra Tarahumara that still maintain their pre-Christian ways. This is the total population, out of 300,000 living in the Sierra Tarahumara,⁵ that still speak the Uto-Aztecan language, Tarahumara (González, *et al.*, 1994). They are considered Tarahumara-*gentiles*.

Uto-Aztecan language

Tarahumara is a Uto-Aztecan (*tronco yutonahua*) language, of the Taracahitan family, which includes, Nahuatl, Yaqui, Tepehuane and Tarahumara. The language was used by the Aztec Empire at the time of European contact. Signs of its usage extends north up to Oregon and Idaho, and as far south as El Salvador (Grimes, 1996). Little is known about the Tarahumara before the Conquest because the language had no writing system. The criteria for distinguishing the population between *mestiza* (W. European-Indian/mix)⁶ and *indígena* (indigenous) is the ability to speak the indigenous language (González, *et al.*, 1994).

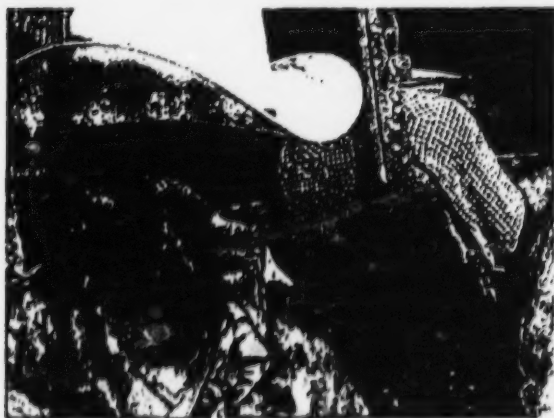


Figure 2: A Tarahumara *mestizo*.

⁴ Almost half of all water for irrigation in Mexico is stored in the north-central region of Mexico around the *Sierra Tarahumara*. There are 26 principle dams and there are more than 40 main lakes. It is the most important agricultural district in Mexico.

⁵ The terms Sierra Madre Occidental and Sierra Tarahumara are synonymous.

⁶ There is a misconception that the conquest and the forced Catholic conversions and the resultant gene-mixing occurred entirely between Spanish and (native) Mexican Indian. The Jesuit Order of Christ, a dominant Catholic institution responsible for sending missionaries into New Spain in the 17th century, was centered in Bohemia (Germany) and included missionaries from all over South-Central Europe, including Bohemia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Prague, Austria, Belgium, France, and Croatia, as well as Spain.

In Uruachi (an village in Chihuahua), the Rarámuri-Indians "*que habitan allí, ya no saben hablar bien el Tarahumara*" (the Rarámuri-Indians who live there no longer know how to speak Tarahumara well.) (Author's translation, García & Suárez, 1995). For example, of the total population of 300,000 inhabitants living in the Sierra Tarahumara, between 229,500-247,534 are *mestizo*-Tarahumara (which means that they don't speak Tarahumara), and only 50,226-60,000 are Rarámuri-Tarahumara (which means that they do speak Tarahumara) (González, *et al.*, 1994). Twenty percent of 50,000 of the Rarámuri-Tarahumara living in SW Chihuahua and the Sierra Tarahumara are literate (Grimes, 1996). Mexico's Federal programs for indigenous education provide only two years (K-1-2) of bilingual education (Tarahumara - Spanish) to elementary level Tarahumara children. The children are taught exclusively in Tarahumara the first 2 years, then introduced to Spanish in grade 2 and increasingly use Spanish throughout the subsequent years (Lori-Taylor, p.c., March 1, 2000).⁷ The texts the children use for the first two years are provided by SEP (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*) working in conjunction with the INI (*Instituto Nacional Indigenista*). The curriculum is developed by the SEP for bilingual schools. The children learn to read after a manner of speaking. The pedagogy of Mexico is by "rote by rote by rote." Tarahumara receive only two years of education in their native language, under a Tarahumara bilingual teacher. After the first few grades the Tarahumara children are not offered any reading in Tarahumara at school. If they continue education in *primaria*, until 6th grade, the classes will be conducted in Spanish. But, this is often not the case; many Tarahumara children, discontinue their education after 3rd grade. A third grade education is the most common adult education level in Mexico. In 1990, 37 percent of Mexico's population did not finish *primaria* (García & Suárez, 1994).⁸

The Tarahumara language remains oral, not written. The attributes of an oral language are that oral traditions remain strong. Vocabulary and notions particular to the Tarahumara find expression inside the Spanish language through humor and metaphor (Lonergan, 1999).

The New Tribes Mission (NTM)

The New Tribes Mission⁹ is a religious, non-denominational, evangelical organization whose objective

⁷ Lori and Dale Taylor completed missionary training at the New Mission Language Institute linguistics and language learning departments. They actually moved in with the Tarahumara in Guachochi to learn the Tarahumara language, develop an alphabet for it, teach the population phonetics, reading and writing, and then translate the Bible. They have lived with theme for over 10 years, and intend to leave the Bible translated and let the Tarahumara set up their own self-functioning, self-supporting, self-propagating church (Pat Bennett, p.c., Feb. 24, 2000).

⁸ Basic Education, "*la primaria*," is the minimum level of education required in Mexico. The "*nivel educativo mínimo*" is given to children from the age of 6 until the age 14.

⁹ The New Tribes Mission Institute is in Jackson, Michigan. <http://www.ntm.org>

is to work with tribal peoples of the world where no one else has. They go to the country, study the language, then get permission to move into the tribe and help them medically and physically, with medicine, food and clothing. They live with the indigenous in their village to learn their language, give them an alphabet, teach them to be literate and eventually translate the Bible into their language. One of the policies of the New Tribes Mission is to work with people *"that no one else is working with,"* hence, the name, New Tribes" (Bennett, p.c., Feb. 24, 2000).¹⁰ We don't want to Americanize them in any way, we simply just want to give the *"people who are living in utter darkness"* the Bible, and help them set up a church (Bennett, p.c., Feb. 24, 2000).

The missionaries of the New Tribes Mission (NTM) are attempting to decode the Tarahumara language and culture (ideological dimensions related to God and religion) in order to learn the language, teach literacy, translate the Bible, and advance and insist upon the Christian ways of living, thinking, believing, and behaving. The NTM missionaries involved receive their compensation from churches wanting to support the work.

The goal of the New Tribes Mission is not only to make the Tarahumara functionally literate in Spanish in order to be able to read the Bible, but it is to decode their ideological beliefs behind their social practices and cultural practices to reveal the Tarahumara religious interests that are in counter to the Christian standard.

*"They are attempting to unravel the western dialect of the language, do scripture translations, and prepare teaching materials that will clearly communicate truth in spite of their present beliefs."*¹¹

Literacy Education

There is a context of language that must be included in literacy education to make grounded cultural reference. Social constructions are historically defined and language gives life to abstract social notions. Because knowledge is socially constructed and is based on lexical variation (vocabulary development) and societal perceptions (script identity), (Vygotsky, 1978), the lexicon of these people is one that is largely of an oral tradition where meaning and symbolic expression in language (oral traditions and metaphor) is descriptive of a historical social reality of widespread language discrimination and struggle. The language of the Tarahumara of north Mexico and the border region (the valley of Juárez) has evolved as a language of oppression through the powers of the Spanish-invasion beginning in 1623, the Roman Catholic conversions ending in 1781, the Mexican-American war and the resultant division of north Mexico (Upper

Tarahumara) into half by the United States and Mexico in 1848/1853, and the failure of the Mexican revolution (for the Chihuahuense peasants aligned with Pancho Villa) in 1917.¹² For literacy education, words as cultural referents and words as social notions must be studied in conjunction with teaching units of speech while teaching units of writing. We must understand the context of language (semantic knowledge) to respect the students' linguistic rights (Perez, et al., 1992, 1994).

The semantics of language

Literacy education involves understanding semantic knowledge for reading and interpreting meaning. It also involves symbolic knowledge representation for writing. Both the understanding of semantics and symbolic representation rely on the languages' background (context) as its cultural framework. One has to understand the cultural framework (perceptions, oppressors, religious beliefs, fatalisms, rebellious reactions, hopes, doubts, etc.) to utilize the cognitive and social nature of literacy acquisition (Perez, et al., 1992, 1994). Because language is embedded in the social life of a community the language learner must learn the values, beliefs and ways of interacting in that community (Genesee, 1994). The consequence of cultural synthesis between Christian ideology and Tarahumara ideology is extreme variation in the content of linguistic messages. Thematics (views of the world) in education should not be devalued or ignored.

Tarahumara remains an oral language, and it is still largely unwritten. What does this mean to the student who is learning words as written symbols of text and words as verbal symbols of semantics in a foreign language (Spanish)? Does Spanish become the language of cognition and thought?

To teach literacy as reading comprehension, one must teach vocabulary definitions or semantic scripts. In the context of bilingual education, one must understand and use the native students conceptual frameworks (cultural knowledge and beliefs) in order to draw comparisons, find equivalents and make clear the meaning of words in another language.

Culture is interconnected with language and it reflects consciousness. Only through a cultural study can one gain insight into Tarahumara vocabulary. When the goal of a bilingual educator is to use cultural attributes (native language and notions expressed in units of speech) of one culture to teach semantics notions of a second language (in our case Christian evangelical notions in Spanish), there exists salient conflicts and barriers to literacy. To clarify this, we have to understand what age the culture is in and what the Tarahumara place value on.

¹⁰ Patricia Bennett entered missionary training in 1978 with New Tribes Mission. She and her husband lived and worked among the Pima Indians of Sonora Mexico for five years. They were learning their language and developing an alphabet for it.

¹¹ Real, S & T. Real. To the Ends of the Earth. NTM Quarterly *Unknown Mexico*, 7(1), 1, Sept. 1987.

¹² Under the 1917 Constitution, no religious organizations are allowed to administer or teach in Mexico's primary, secondary, or normal (higher education schools) (Goodwin, 1998).

Constructs (vocabulary) related to the Church

The territories of the Tarahumara Indians originate in the north along the border dividing Mexico from the United States. Since 1853, the delimitations are the waterways the Mexicans call the *río Bravo* (which Americans call the *río Grande*) and the *río Conchos* following the Sierra Madre Mountains through the whole state of Chihuahua, from upper Tarahumara in *Nvo. Casas Grandes*, to *San Francisco* and *San Felipe de Conchos* (now *Delicias*) to lower Tarahumara around *Hidalgo de Parral*, and to *Durango*, Chihuahua. The land and peoples fell under control of the Roman Catholic institution around 1623 (González, 1991). One of the first Jesuit missions was just outside Parral, in *San Pablo*, now *Balleza*. Balleza is at the base of the Sierra Tarahumara, on the main route into and out of Guachochi. Balleza and Parral are located on the fertile valley once used by the Tarahumara for agricultural cultivation... The Tarahumara are agricultural nomads, animal herders, peasants and farmers. Parral was the location of the first military garrison established in 1649 to protect the missions, and it became the permanent seat of the governor (González, 1991). It was out of Parral that the missionaries conducted their work of teaching the faith, baptism, and salvation of souls.



Figure 3: Tarahumara *Pintos* (painted ones) representing *farseos* (Pharisees) during the *Semana Santa*.

Under the pretext of teaching the Tarahumara the Christian faith, an abundant amount of silver was exported to Europe. The captured Indians (those accepting the faith) served as mining and agricultural labor. But, as the Jesuit Priest Neumann wrote of the Tarahumara in 1730:

Due to the rudeness and the barbarianism of the native, the little fruit that the Christian faith produced in them, their refusal to be baptized, to live concentrated in the missions, and to give up their bad habits of drunkenness and promiscuity, it was impossible for the missionaries to teach them Christian ways of life (Author's translation, González, 1991, p. 33).¹³

¹³ The text from which this comes, *Historia de las rebeliones en*

The Christian conversions (fulfilling labor demands) were not successful. Spanish policy allowed that non-Christian Indians could be made slaves, and many children were kidnapped to be brought up as servants. There were laws until 1781 that officially sanctioned the forced removal of Tarahumara from their settlements, to work on Spanish *haciendas* and laws that forced them to work in mining operations (Pennington, 1969).

The first Tarahumara rebellion in Parral was in 1650. The Tarahumara desecrated the Church and destroyed the images. A victorious celebration (*tesguinada*) followed, and so did a 1670 massacre, a 1692 epidemic of dysentery, measles, and bubonic plague, and a 1698 massacre. The Indians who were not captured and executed¹⁴ (mostly women and children), were taken into the missions to serve as slaves and concubines.

The Forced Conversions

The suppressions in upper Tarahumara during the *Semana Santa* effectively demonstrate the Catholic-forced conversions under Spanish absolutist rule in Mexico. On the Day of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (21 of March, 1698)¹⁵ the captive Tarahumara gentiles were baptized and then their heads were cut off and put on tall poles to serve as an example to the others if they rebelled (González, 1991; García, 1992; Kennedy, 1978). This violence set off the bloodiest rebellion throughout the whole northern Tarahumara country.

The Tarahumara surrounded the buildings, battered upon the doors of the church. They climbed upon the altars, tore from their places the images of the Mother of God and of the saints, rent them asunder, and cast the pieces into the river that flowed close by. They smashed the altars and the baptismal font, [...] and laid hands on everything else, destroying and ruining all (Dunne, 1948, p. 181).

The infamous Spanish Army General Retana moved from Parral and with the approval of Father Joseph Neumann he beheaded 30 Tarahumara men and posted their heads along the road near Cocomórchic (Kennedy, 1978; Jessen, 1996). Captain Retana continued to behead another 33 men, placing their head on poles near Sisoguichic (Kennedy, 1978; Jessen, 1996). Under Father Joseph Neumann, all the missionaries triumphantly

la Sierra Tarahumara, was translated by Luis González Rodríguez (1991) from a 1730 manuscript written in Latin by Father Joseph Neumann, a famous Jesuit working in New Spain.

¹⁴ The Tarahumara prisoners, before they suffered capital punishment, were allowed a confession, and the unbaptized were allowed baptism. This way they could die as Christians (González, 1991).

¹⁵ The 21st of March is also the last day of the 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, or the *Semana Santa* (Holy Week of the Passover) which is celebrated from March 14 to March 21. It is the festival ushering in the New Year. This is the pagan new year.

returned to reconstruct their destroyed and abandoned missions in Norogachi, Sisoguichi, Carichí, Coyáchi, Nonoaba, Papigóchi, Cajurichi, ...everywhere in the New Tarahumara. The mode of resistance from the beginning of the 18th century until the present has been one of avoidance of contact and withdrawal further and further into the canyons (Kennedy, 1978).

*"At the beginning of the twentieth century there was no evidence to suggest that any true work of God had been done amongst these people."*¹⁶

The Jesuits were expelled from north Mexico in 1767 and they returned in 1900.¹⁷ Ninety-seven percent of Tarahumara are Christianized and many live in the *pueblos* and surrounding *ranchos* at the base of the Sierra Madre rivers systems. Only 3% of the Tarahumara escaped the mission reduction and are considered *cimarrones* (wild). Their culture evolved in response to the Jesuit Order of Christ. When they see a *mestizo*, or a *chabochi*, they tell their children *tí rijóy*, which means "evil man." The prefix *tí*, comes from *chati*, which means "evil." And *rijóy* means "man." They believe that the *Chabochis*, (*gringos* or *gabachos*-whites, literally "bearded-white devil") do not go as high into heaven when they die as the Tarahumara (Kennedy, 1978). They believe that the church and its representatives are allies of the Devil (Bonfiglioli, 1995). Their beliefs are reinforced in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, during a religious wake called the *Fareseos* (Pharisees). There are many psychological impacts stemming from the forced Catholic conversion. The Tarahumara remember the ancient historical conflict. They do not trust the *Chabochi* and they always suspect trickery.

*"A good understanding of culture will help us use God's word to invade their darkness."*¹⁸

*"The Tarahumara need corrective teaching."*¹⁹

*"Darkness-this word describes the existence of the Tarahumara."*²⁰

It was from survey work that the New Tribes Mission decided that there was a big need to reach the northern tribal groups of Mexico (Bennett, p.c., Feb. 23, 2000). They state that over 66 percent of the world's population have no mention of Christ in their language and many

languages were never recorded. The people don't read or write, they only speak their languages. It's sad because it has been just about 2000 years and the job of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth is still not finished (Bennett, p.c., Feb. 24, 2000).

The Tarahumara gentiles

There may be many uncounted Tarahumara still living outside of baptism. These are the Tarahumara who are considered *gentiles*, *brancos* (wild) and pagans. The "Christianized" on the other hand, retain nearly as much of aboriginal religious customs as their more rebellious counterparts (Kennedy, 1978). There are no significant differences between the Tarahumara and the Rarámuri. The cultural differences have not been found to be profound between the two (Pastron, 1977; Bennett & Zingg, 1935). The differences are that the Rarámuri: 1) reject the imagery of the church, 2) bury their dead in caves (and live seasonally in caves), 3) use stone-pile altars, 4) are semi-nomadic, 5) and dance three major *fiestas* per year: the new year or *Semana Santa* (in March), the feast of the first fruits (in August), and the feast of the harvest *Día de los Muertos* (in November) (Bennett & Zingg, 1935). The Tarahumara-Christians accept the imagery of the Catholic Church and Catholicism, they bury their dead in the *campo Santo* (cemetery), they live in the *pueblos* (mission centers), and they dance all the Catholic *fiestas* (holidays).



Figure 4: Two altars: a Catholic mission and a Tarahumara stone-pile in Norogachi, Chihuahua. (Photo by Patricia Small)

The Tarahumara vocabulary places value on sharing (*kórima*), the avoidance of coveting (*echando mal ojo*), communal labor, and using beer (*tesguino*) as the instrument of payment, not money. Beer is the medium of exchange. Their laws are verbally transmitted in advising (*consejos*). They believe in doing things righteously. They have the role of those protecting God. They are against stealing and shedding blood, believing that when one commits these acts, he commits them against God himself (González, et al., 1994). They represent their beliefs by symbolic gestures of metaphor,

¹⁶In His Time. NTM Quarterly *Unknown Mexico*, 12(1),1-3, Sept. 1992.

¹⁷The extinct peoples of north Mexico from the State of Chihuahua include: cocoyomes, tobosos, conchos, cholomes, chizos, piro, sumas, julimes, caquitatomes, jócomes, sobaipuris, and chichitames. There are only 7,000 pima (O'Oba) remaining, 3,000 tepehuanes (O'Dami), 2,000 Guarojo, and 50,000 Rarámuri (Stephani & Urteaga, et al., 1994).

¹⁸Wingo, T. The Wingos. NTM Quarterly *Unknown Mexico*, 15(1), 2, Sept. 1995.

¹⁹In His Time. NTM Quarterly *Unknown Mexico*, 12(1),1-3, Sept. 1992.

²⁰ibid.

ceremonial dancing, and systems of servitude in beer drinking.

Tesgüinada (Beer Drinking)

Tesgüinadas are pre-Christian religious wakes centered on all night beer drinking. *Tesgüino* is corn-fermented beer. Beer and humor are central to every Tarahumara *fiesta*. Tarahumara culture encourages drunkenness and attaches no shame or disgrace to it (Fontana, 1979). They worship with drinking, laughter and dance. These are considered Tarahumara-gentile practices. Humor is intimately connected with religion. It is during High Holy days where joking rituals are undertaken. The ritual involves interaction with supernatural forces. The *tesgüinada* represents a vigil, a watch-and-wait period founded on a mythic past. According to one legend, (Bonfiglioli 1995), God and the Devil were brothers who, in the beginning, were having *tesgüino* together. The Devil caused God to become drunk. When God became drunk, the Devil had sexual relations with God's wife. From this incident, the Devil was confined to the earth. The *tesgüinada* ritual marks sacred Holy Days. The all-night events are forums where the participants reenact an ancient myth believed to maintain the cosmic balance between good and evil until God awakens to take revenge.

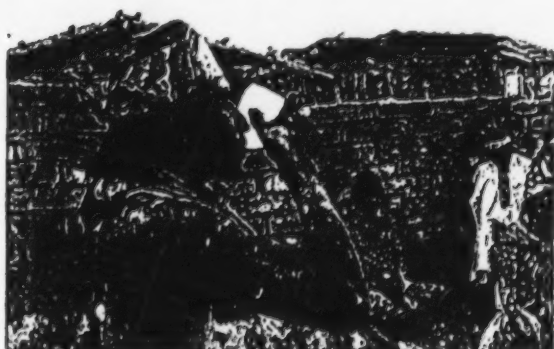


Figure 5: A Tarahumara *fareseos* drinking *tesgüino* on Viernes Santo (Good Friday) during the *Semana Santa*.

"They believe that their God commands them to drink."²¹

"By the way, they are not drunkards, no sir! After all, their drinking is done in honor of their god. He is the one that has ordered it of them."²²

"Your drunken friends who invited you to the corn-beer party would be the ones who beat and stabbed you."²³

²¹Taylor, L. What are you Doing? Tarahumara (Central) Tribe. NTM Quarterly Unknown Mexico, 7(2), 1, Dec. 1987.

²²Taylor, D. Systemic Theology? Tarahumara (Central) Tribe. NTM Quarterly Unknown Mexico, 7(2), 2, Dec. 1987.

²³Taylor, D. Could you live like a Tarahumara? NTM Quarterly Unknown Mexico, 1(4), 4, May 1982.

Los fareseos. The *fareseos* (the Pharisees) is the name of the *tesgüinada* that the Tarahumara perform for the Passover, or the 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) in Mexico.²⁴ The purpose of the *Semana Santa* is to strengthen *Onorúame* (God the Father) so that He can continue to oppose the devil, thus allowing the animals and the people to survive for another year (Kennedy, 1989). The first and the last Sabbath days of the Holy Week are given to *tesgüinada*. Those who protect the earth are the Rarámuri soldiers who enact the mythological battle between the sons of the devil, who are painted white and called Pharisees, and the sons of *Onorúame*, who are the Tarahumara soldiers. They begin dancing on Thursday. They bring out and parade a stuffed cowboy who represents the embodiment of Judas the traitor (and all those in alliance with him—the *fareseos*, the *mestizos*, the *Chabochis*). This represents the commencement of struggle. For three days and three nights, the Tarahumara *fareseos* play the drums and the flute continuously. They visit, dance, and drink *tesgüino* at every home throughout the village. This is a reenactment of the anarchy created by those in alliance with Church at the time of Christ. They mimic the search for those who also are believing in the new ideology. On the final Sabbath day of the *Semana Santa*, the symbolic reincarnation of evil (Judas) is burned. Only on this last day, the day of the feast to *Onorúame*, do the Tarahumara *fareseos* remove their white paint and transform themselves into Tarahumara soldiers. The transformation and triumphant killing of the evil one represents the victory of good over evil. It is how the Tarahumara maintain the "cosmic balance" on the earth. This is done annually, and it represents the *inicio del año* for the Rarámuri, the New Year celebration (González, et. al., 1994; Bennett & Zingg, 1935).

"Their god is the creator of all the Tarahumara, making them the elite, the supreme of mankind! All the rest of humanity is the creation of the devil!"²⁵

"Without their sacrifices of cattle, grain, and corn-beer, this (god's) anger would destroy the world!"²⁶

Comico sexual. Ritual humor is created by those held in high esteem by the society, usually a trickster. The humorists reenact the behavior of the transgressor (the Devil who introduced sexual sin) and the disgrace of those violators (the *mestizo* compatriots) through *comico sexual*, or repeated reference to sexual violations of the norm. During the *fareseos* (Pharisees) *tesgüinada*, the

²⁴ The ancient ordinance of the Passover was first described in a 1491 BC manuscript as the law given at the time of the Hebrew Exodus. It was to be enacted annually as the New Year celebration. It forbids the eating of leavened bread for seven days and on the last day is a feast to the Lord. See Exodus 13:4-6. Tortilla is native to the Tarahumara, not Spanish inherited.

²⁵In His Time. NTM Quarterly Unknown Mexico, 12(1), 3, Sept. 1992.

²⁶ibid.

sons of the wicked Angel, the *fareseos*, have bad intentions which they demonstrate through sexual jokes and nonverbal sexual activities. During *tesgüinadas*, "*cosas malas no son malas*" (bad things are not bad) and they indulge overtly in illicit forbidden behaviors (Bonfiglioli, 1995). Comedians represent the behavior and disgrace of the transgressors by violating the norm through reference to sexual sin (*cómico sexual*). The trickster assumes the identity of the mythological characters in alliance with the Devil. The more *tesgüino*, the more explosions of laughter. Simulated acts of copulation are not uncommon. Such behaviors create the disorder that sustains laughter throughout the night. The behaviors are the reverse of everyday routines. And the ritual humorists do the opposite of the norm and have the freedom to depart from conventional behavior. The laughter of the ritual ceremony serves to communicate to the supernatural mythological beings that a "watch" is underway, where the "sons of God" are waiting, watching, and prepared to ward off the "sons of the Devil."



Figure 6 : A Tarahumara Pascolero (Shaman)
(Photo by J.E. Lonergan)

"Since time long forgotten, these people have been steeped in witchcraft and superstition."²⁷

Brujería. The Tarahumara culture is filled with superstition and belief in witchcraft. In Tarahumara society, there exists a strong obligation to sharing and generosity. There is a belief that if one does not share with his neighbor that the latter will bewitch him. Among, the Tarahumara, malicious intent is a necessary ingredient of witchcraft (Pastron, 1977). And solely by *echando ojo* (putting the eye on, or coveting) can a jealous neighbor cause *mala voluntad* (bad intent). Sorcery is believed to be worked by persons who are able to control circumstance by sheer thought (Passin, 1942). Tarahumara view personal illness, personal tragedy, suffering, misfortune, and loss as inescapable crimes attributed to witchcraft. In this way, the Tarahumara view

all negative effect as precarious. This causes a fear of revealing, and this is a reason the Tarahumara chose to live isolated in the mountains. They feel that any of one's neighbors can be enemies and evildoers, anyone can access witchcraft. To prevent misfortune stemming from covetousness, they share everything. Asking for *kórima* is a basic indigenous notion. All the Rarámuri have the right to ask someone in a better economic situation than they are in to give them food, money, shelter, water. *Kórima* is a right that all the Rarámuri individuals and families have in the community (González, *et al.*, 1994). Their economic system is cooperative and reciprocity defines their moral universe. Individual accumulation and ambition are threats to their egalitarian lifestyle (Jessen, 1996).

Is it our right to teach notions that are in counter to their belief system? Should the Christians correct their dialogues on "sexual humor", if they use humor in wake-activity to ward off evil? Should the Christians teach against witchcraft if they believe that covetousness is dangerous and not sharing spreads misfortune (witchcraft)? Should the Christians teach them that drinking is indulgent, if without beer (*tesgüino*) they have no system of repayment, no communal forum for transmission of values and beliefs, no ceremonial medium, and no communal labor element to organize around? Can the Christians teach them that they are "sinners and in darkness," if they believe that they alone are the "Pillars of the Sky," and the only sin of the Rarámuri is "not to dance?" (Jessen, 1996).

When the purpose of learning to be literate is to teach religion to a society that is largely rooted in oral tradition and bound exclusively to oral folklore based on religion itself, there exists a contradiction between respecting the students' prior experience and the educators' denial of these influences on their construction of meaning. The altering of the social belief system of the native indigenous of Mexico under the pretext of teaching literacy for Bible translation, and teaching the gospel of Christ against the social phenomenon of the indigenous believing that they are already the "called and chosen people," constitutes a social injustice. The process is thus oppressive to Tarahumara socio-linguistic cultural identity.

Reactions!

A handful of disgruntled men have been spreading lies and threats against the missionaries and the believers. For quite some time they have been attempting to cause problems by threatening the believers and other who would be interested in the Gospel (Joy Millikan, p.c., Feb. 25, 2000). The Tarahumara have a formal complaint to the Department of Indian Affairs and a meeting is scheduled to officially kick the missionaries out of the region and also attempt to expel the believers from their own land that has been passed down to them from generation to generation (Joy Millikan, p.c., Feb. 25, 2000).²⁸

²⁷In His Time. NTM Quarterly *Unknown Mexico*, 12(1), Sept. 1992.

²⁸Joy and Marshal Millikan are NTM missionaries who are

Alternatives?

Assuming that language evolves out of culture, the goal of the missionaries to make a shift in their culture in order to justify the spreading of the gospel constitutes a condition that does not promote and preserve the indigenous culture and language. We must promote an environment of criticism and novelty. We must overcome ethnocentricity and historical selectivity. We must become sensitive to history. The out-of-school experiences of these people are immensely rich and complex. Educators must use the sociocultural and cognitive language socialization that these language minority students bring to school as a basis for planning their education. This can only happen if teachers become knowledgeable about and comfortable with the larger communities in which these children grow up and live (Genesee, 1994). Tarahumara have a value system that is distinct from the *mestizos* and the *chabochis*. If we mainstream education, we change what they think. If we teach in Spanish only, the children become member of that community and its belief system, and its values, and its notions. To force a cultural change on a people who do not desire that change lead to the loss of language and the loss of a people.

"Is their supremacy as the People legitimate?"²⁹

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Patty Small for driving her Suburban, to Lupita Leyva Salgado of El Orranteño, to Tarahumara bilingual teacher Isabel Ontiveros Cruz of Guachochi who took us to witness the ceremony *de la Semana Santa*. Special thanks to the missionaries Patricia Bennett, Joy Millikan, Lori Taylor, and Dale Taylor of the NTM for their correspondence, and to Dr. H.R. Matteson of the Center for International Programs at NMSU for the support from the Mexico Small Grants Program.

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living in Chihuahua, and they did work with the Tarahumara in Caborachi, in the Sierra Tarahumara in the 1980s.

²⁹ In His Time. (1992, Sept.). NTM Quarterly *Unknown Mexico*, 12(1), 1-3.

Foundation for Endangered Languages

Manifesto

1. Preamble

1.1. The Present Situation

At this point in human history, most human languages are spoken by exceedingly few people. And that majority, the majority of languages, is about to vanish.

The most authoritative source on the languages of the world (Ethnologue, Grimes 1996) lists just over 6,500 living languages. Population figures are available for just over 6,000 of them (or 92%). Of these 6,000, it may be noted that:

- 52% are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people;
- 28% by fewer than 1,000; and
- 83% are restricted to single countries, and so are particularly exposed to the policies of a single government.

At the other end of the scale, 10 major languages, each spoken by over 109 million people, are the mother tongues of almost half (49%) of the world's population.

More important than this snapshot of proportions and populations is the outlook for survival of the languages we have. Hard comparable data here are scarce or absent, often because of the sheer variety of the human condition: a small community, isolated or bilingual, may continue for centuries to speak a unique language, while in another place a populous language may for social or political reasons die out in little more than a generation. Another reason is that the period in which records have been kept is too short to document a trend: e.g. the Ethnologue has been issued only since 1951. However, it is difficult to imagine many communities sustaining serious daily use of a language for even a generation with fewer than 100 speakers: yet at least 10% of the world's living languages are now in this position.

Some of the forces which make for language loss are clear: the impacts of urbanization, Westernization and global communications grow daily, all serving to diminish the self-sufficiency and self-confidence of small and traditional communities. Discriminatory policies, and population movements also take their toll of languages.

In our era, the preponderance of tiny language communities means that the majority of the world's languages are vulnerable not just to decline but to extinction.

1.2. The Likely Prospect

There is agreement among linguists who have considered the situation that over half of the world's languages are moribund, i.e. not effectively being passed on to the next generation. We and our children, then, are living at the point in human history where, within perhaps two generations, most languages in the world will die out.

This mass extinction of languages may not appear immediately life-threatening. Some will feel that a reduction in numbers of languages will ease communication, and perhaps help build nations, even global solidarity. But it has been well pointed out that the success of humanity in colonizing the planet has been due to our ability to develop cultures suited for survival in a variety of environments. These cultures have everywhere been transmitted by languages, in oral traditions and latterly in written literatures. So when language transmission itself breaks down, especially before the advent of literacy in a culture, there is always a large loss of inherited knowledge.

Valued or not, that knowledge is lost, and humanity is the poorer. Along with it may go a large part of the pride and self-identity of the community of former speakers.

And there is another kind of loss, of a different type of knowledge. As each language dies, science, in linguistics, anthropology, prehistory and psychology, loses one more precious source of data, one more of the diverse and unique ways that the human mind can express itself through a language's structure and vocabulary.

We cannot now assess the full effect of the massive simplification of the world's linguistic diversity now occurring. But language loss, when it occurs, is sheer loss, irreversible and not in itself creative. Speakers of an endangered language may well resist the extinction of their traditions, and of their linguistic identity. They have every right to do so. And we, as scientists, or concerned human beings, will applaud them in trying to preserve part of the diversity which is one of our greatest strengths and treasures.

1.3. The Need for an Organization

We cannot stem the global forces which are at the root of language decline and loss.

But we can work to lessen the ignorance which sees language loss as inevitable when it is not, and does not properly value all that will go when a language itself vanishes.

We can work to see technological developments, such as computing and telecommunications, used to support small communities and their traditions rather than to supplant them.

And we can work to lessen the damage:

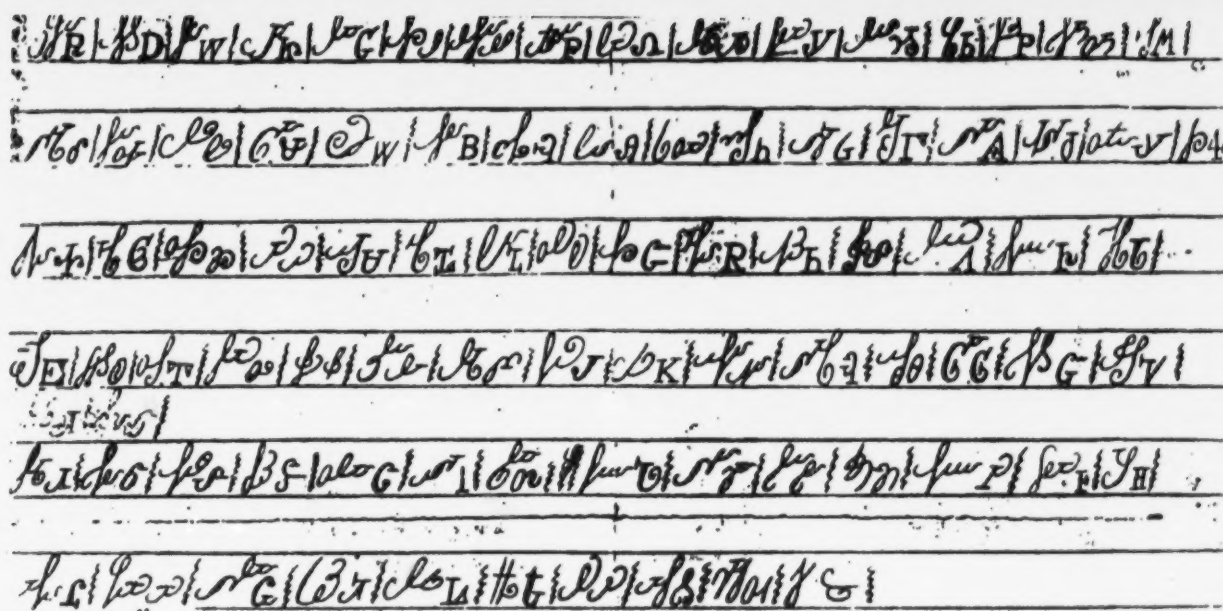
- by recording as much as possible of the languages of communities which seem to be in terminal decline;
- by emphasizing particular benefits of the diversity still remaining; and
- by promoting literacy and language maintenance programmes, to increase the strength and morale of the users of languages in danger.

In order to further these aims, there is a need for an autonomous international organization which is not constrained or influenced by matters of race, politics, gender or religion. This organization will recognise in language issues the principles of self-determination, and group and individual rights. It will pay due regard to economic, social, cultural, community and humanitarian considerations. Although it may work with any international, regional or local Authority, it will retain its independence throughout. Membership will be open to those in all walks of life.

2. Aims and Objectives

The Foundation for Endangered Languages exists to support, enable and assist the documentation, protection and promotion of endangered languages. In order to do this, it aims:-

- (i) To raise awareness of endangered languages, both inside and outside the communities where they are spoken, through all channels and media;
- (ii) To support the use of endangered languages in all contexts: at home, in education, in the media, and in social, cultural and economic life;
- (iii) To monitor linguistic policies and practices, and to seek to influence the appropriate authorities where necessary;
- (iv) To support the documentation of endangered languages, by offering financial assistance, training, or facilities for the publication of results;
- (v) To collect together and make available information of use in the preservation of endangered languages;
- (vi) To disseminate information on all of the above activities as widely as possible.



The front cover shows Charles Bird King's 1828 portrait of **Sequoyah**, (ca. 1776 - 1843), the inventor of Cherokee writing. Here the original form of the symbols is contrasted with their present-day form.

A silversmith by trade, and unable to read in any other language, nevertheless from 1809 he worked, aided only by his daughter Ayoka, to devise this first writing system for Cherokee. The result is a syllabary of 85 letters, based on systematic, phonetic principles. Known as an eccentric, he convinced the tribe of its value through blind tests; and in 1820-1 he secured its adoption, so bringing mass literacy to his people, including the establishment of a newspaper *The Cherokee Phoenix* in New Echota, Georgia. (This was destroyed by the Georgia militia in 1838, an early event leading up to the forced removal of the Cherokees to Oklahoma, in defiance of the US Supreme Court.)

D _a	R _e	T _i	Ꭰ _o	Ꭱ _u	i _v
S _{ga} Ꭰ _{ka}	F _{ge}	Y _{gi}	A _{go}	J _{gu}	E _{gv}
Ꭲ _{ha}	P _{he}	Ꭰ _{hi}	F _{ho}	Ꭶ _{hu}	Ꭷ _{hv}
W _{la}	Ꭳ _{le}	P _{li}	G _{lo}	M _{lu}	Ꭹ _{lv}
Ꭵ _{ma}	Ꭰ _{me}	H _{mi}	Ꭺ _{mo}	Y _{mu}	
Ꭼ _{na} Ꭲ _{hna} G _{nah}	Ꭱ _{ne}	h _{ni}	Z _{no}	Ꭰ _{nu}	Ꭳ _{nv}
T _{qua}	Ꭰ _{que}	P _{qui}	V _{quo}	Ꭱ _{quu}	E _{quv}
U _{sa} Ꭰ _s	Ꭶ _{se}	B _{si}	Ꭲ _{so}	Ꭳ _{su}	R _{sv}
L _{da} W _{ta}	S _{de} Ꭲ _{te}	I _{di} Ꭲ _{ti}	V _{do}	S _{du}	Ꭳ _{dv}
Ꭰ _{dla} L _{tla}	L _{tle}	C _{tli}	Ꭲ _{tlo}	Ꭳ _{tlu}	P _{tlv}
G _{tsa}	V _{tse}	h _{tsi}	K _{tso}	J _{tsu}	C _{tsv}
G _{wa}	Ꭰ _{we}	Ꭳ _{wi}	Ꭳ _{wo}	Ꭳ _{wu}	G _{wv}
Ꭰ _{ya}	B _{ye}	Ꭳ _{yi}	Ꭲ _{yo}	G _{yu}	B _{yv}